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Establishing Broadcast Monitoring as Open Source Intelligence The BBC Monitoring Service during the Second World War

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**Establishing Broadcast Monitoring as Open
Source Intelligence: The BBC Monitoring Service
during the Second World War**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of War Studies, King's College London
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Abstract

Given the recent surge of interest in Open Source Intelligence (OSINT), surprisingly little attention has been devoted to existing open source agencies or their historic role. As the first full length academic study of the BBC Monitoring Service, this thesis seeks to examine one of the earliest historic attempts to systematically manage and exploit publicly available, open source information for intelligence purposes. It utilises the Imperial War Museum's rarely used collection of BBC Monitoring transcripts, in conjunction with traditional archival sources and oral interviews, to trace the origins, processes and institutional structure developed by the Monitoring Service during its formative years. This study further assesses the collection priorities of BBC Monitoring during World War Two, traces the historic flow of monitored material around the wartime Government and BBC, and establishes the institutional role of BBCM in the conduct of Britain's war effort. Three case study chapters, focusing on the outbreak of war, Dunkirk and D-Day, particularly assess the process and detailed collection priorities of the Monitoring Service during key events throughout the war. This study thus makes a contribution to the historic picture of British intelligence during World War Two, and is bound to encourage future study of the BBC Monitoring Service and its archives. Overall, the BBC Monitoring Service is judged a historic success story. This thesis argues that this success can be attributed to three key qualities developed during the wartime period: trust, breadth, and adaptability. The organisation established a relationship of trust with the Government; developed and maintained a remarkable breadth of broadcast coverage; and showed a constant ability to adapt to both customer demands and changing strategic priorities.

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List of Abbreviations

BBCM	BBC Monitoring Service
BBC MSI	BBC Monitoring Service index, held by IWM
BBC MST	BBC Monitoring Service transcript collection, IWM
BBC MSD	BBC Monitoring Service collection of Daily Digests, IWM
BBC RU	BBC Research Unit Daily Synopsis of Releases, IWM
BBC:WAC	BBC Written Archives Centre
BL:SA	British Library Sound Archive
BST	British Summer Time
CAB	British Cabinet Office
CBS	Colombia Broadcasting Station
CHQ	Country Headquarters, Woburn Abbey
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DNB	Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro
EH	Electra House
CID	Committee of Imperial Defence
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FBIS	Foreign Broadcast Information Service, US monitoring service
FBMS	Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service, initial name of FBIS
FRPS	Foreign Research and Press Service
FO	British Foreign Office
GES	German European Service broadcast
GHS	German Home Service broadcast
GOS	German Overseas Service broadcast
HO	British Home Office
IPA	Institute for Propaganda Analysis
IWM	Imperial War Museum
IWM:SA	Imperial War Museum Sound Archive
JBC	Joint Broadcasting Committee
JPBC	Joint Meeting of the Planning and Broadcasting Committee
KL	Karl Lehmann private papers
MEW	Ministry of Economic Warfare
MIIO	Monitored for Important Items Only

MoI	Ministry of Information
NBBS	New British Broadcasting Station
NBC	National Broadcasting Company
OSINT	Open Source Intelligence
OWI	Office of War Information
PID	Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office
POW	Prisoner of War
PWE	Political Warfare Executive
RIIA	Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House
SOE	Special Operations Executive
TNA	The National Archives

Introduction

BBC Monitoring (BBCM) is currently responsible for selecting, translating and collating coverage of global TV, radio, press, Internet and news agency sources for a wide range of customers in the government and private sector.¹ Now described as ‘the UK’s principal open-source collection agency’, BBCM first developed what would now be considered the operational principles of Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) during the Second World War, when it was created to report on international broadcasting.² Throughout its almost 75 year history, the organisation has provided a continuous assessment of news, information, propaganda, indications of countries’ intentions and attempts to use media as a channel for international diplomacy.³

Given the surge of interest in OSINT over the past decade, there has been remarkably little academic study of the BBC Monitoring Service or its historic role. As the first full-length academic study of BBCM, this thesis seeks to examine the initial development of the operational processes and institutional structure of the organisation during its formative years. It further aims to assess the collection priorities of the organisation during World War Two and consider the institutional role of BBCM in the conduct of Britain’s information, political and military war.

The thesis is largely based on an examination of the vast, scarcely used collection of original monitors’ transcripts held by the Imperial War Museum at Duxford. This collection offers a remarkable record of international broadcasting during the Second World War period, all collected together and all translated into English. This collection, in conjunction with the edited documents that were distributed to BBC Monitoring consumers, the ‘Digests’, allows for a detailed assessment of the operation and collection priorities of the

¹ BBC Monitoring website: <http://www.monitor.bbc.co.uk/>, 1 June 2012.

² Alban Webb & Catherine Haddon, ‘An Internal Housekeeping Matter’: Whitehall and the BBC Monitoring Service’, *The Political Quarterly* 78:2 (2007), p.214.

³ Brian Rotheray, ‘A History of BBC Monitoring’ (BBC Monitoring), p.8: http://www.monitor.bbc.co.uk/about_us/BBCMhistory%20revisions%20x.pdf, 10 June 2012.

Service during specific historic time periods. Such an examination should both suggest and encourage future use of the IWM archive itself, and also make it easier for future researchers to use and assess BBC monitored material as a source.

This study is further based on a number of oral interviews, conducted by the author, with former BBC Monitoring Service employees. These oral interviews played a crucial role in the research process, out of proportion with their regrettably small number. The interview process encouraged monitors to reflect on the considerations and thought processes that guided their everyday work. As well as providing direct evidence, these personal insights allowed for a critical analysis of the BBC Monitoring Service transcript collection itself. Such an informed analysis further revealed the complexity of the monitor's wartime role, for which little written documentation exists, and also provided the evidential support for this assessment.

During its early years the BBC Monitoring Service undoubtedly experienced the small problems and tensions faced by any new organisation, especially one forced to rapidly expand. Overall, however, the wartime Monitoring Service can be judged a success story. It received regular funding for its operations and expansion throughout the war, attracted anecdotal support for the value of its services, and moreover secured support for its continued existence during the post-war period, Cold War and beyond. This thesis will suggest that BBCM's success can be summarised in three words: trust, breadth and adaptability. The Monitoring Service managed to establish a relationship of trust with the Government; it developed and maintained a remarkable breadth of broadcast coverage; and it showed a constant ability to adapt to both customer demands and changing strategic priorities.

The remainder of this introduction will begin with a brief review of literature on intelligence in the Second World War and consider the absence of BBC Monitoring from this work. The present extent of literature on media monitoring will then be surveyed, and relevant work on the subjects of OSINT and translation will be briefly introduced. Work on these subjects will be explored in

more depth within the main body of the thesis. Finally, a chapter outline and a note on sources will be provided.

World War Two Intelligence Literature

Academic studies of intelligence during the Second World War have entirely neglected to consider the historic contribution, or even existence, of the BBC Monitoring Service. The most notable omission was from the five volume official history of British Intelligence in the Second World War edited by F. H. Hinsley, in which the Monitoring Service was not mentioned once.⁴ The first volume in the series did state that the forerunner of the Political Warfare Executive (PWE) had prepared a digest of foreign press and radio, and also conducted analysis on enemy propaganda at the beginning of the war. It was thus implicitly acknowledged that media sources and their analysis may have played a role in intelligence, but this work was not explored and the role of BBC Monitoring in supplying data to PWE, or its organisational predecessors, was not mentioned either.⁵

The reason Hinsley's series completely ignored BBC Monitoring was primarily a reflection of the underdeveloped state of intelligence studies at the time of the books' publication. The first serious academic literature on intelligence, which only emerged from the mid 1970s, concentrated on the examination of secret sources and methods.⁶ This trend was undoubtedly encouraged by the influence of the studies of Ultra, described as the 'greatest secret' of World War Two, on the emergence of intelligence studies as a serious academic discipline.⁷ It was further reinforced by the fact that the other major strand of early intelligence literature was on the subject of covert action, driven by the 1975 exposure of

⁴ F. H. Hinsley [et al.], *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vols. 1-5 (London: HMSO, 1979-1990).

⁵ F. H. Hinsley [et al.], *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 1 (London: HMSO, 1979), p.90.

⁶ Christopher R Moran, 'Coming to Clarity: The Pursuit of Intelligence History: Methods, Sources and Trajectories in the United Kingdom', *Studies in Intelligence* 55:2 (2011), pp.33-56.

⁷ Ronald Lewin, *Ultra Goes to War: The First Account of World War II's Greatest Secret Based on Official Documents* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1978). The first published work on Ultra was F. W. Winterbotham, *The Ultra Secret* (Aylesbury: Harper Collins, 1974).

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) ‘dirty tricks’, which included illegal spying on US civilians and plots to assassinate foreign statesmen, notably Fidel Castro.⁸ The five volume series on British intelligence, which began to be published from 1979, was thus influenced by the bias towards secret sources and clandestine activity. It also had a large volume of unexplored ground to cover.

Works uncovering the secret sources and methods of the wartime intelligence community continued to be published throughout the 1980s and 1990s, boosted by the British Government’s decision to allow the release of increasing numbers of files relating to Ultra, SOE and MI5 as the new millennium approached.⁹ Research into the British intelligence organisation has most recently been augmented by the release of three studies of the organisational histories of MI5, MI6 and GCHQ, the former two based on their authors’ access to as yet unclassified documentation.¹⁰ The efforts of early academic researchers to uncover the ‘missing dimension’ of intelligence in history has only recently begun to result in the incorporation of intelligence as a factor in non-intelligence studies of specific aspects and events of the Second World War.¹¹ Reflecting the absence of BBC Monitoring from dedicated intelligence studies, the Service has also received very little consideration within broad or specific histories of World War Two.

Literature on Media Monitoring, 1945 - 2000

The exclusion of BBC Monitoring and similar media monitoring agencies from consideration within intelligence studies meant that for many years there was no

⁸ Christopher Andrew, ‘Reflections on Intelligence Historiography since 1939’, in Gregory Treverton & Wilhelm Agrell (eds.), *National Intelligence Systems: Current Research and Future Prospects* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.39.

⁹ Moran, ‘Coming to Clarity’, p.43.

¹⁰ Christopher Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorized History of MI5* (London: Allen Lane, 2009); Keith Jeffery, *MI6: The History of the Secret Intelligence Service, 1909-1949* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010); Richard J. Aldrich, *GCHQ: The Uncensored Story of Britain’s Most Secret Intelligence Agency* (London: Harper Press, 2010).

¹¹ Christopher M. Andrew & David Dilks, *The Missing Dimension: Governments and Intelligence Communities in the Twentieth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1984); Christopher Andrew, ‘Intelligence, International Relations and ‘Under-theorisation’’, *Intelligence and National Security* 19:2 (2004), pp.170-184.

comfortable academic field or context within which to study the historic operation or impact of these organisations.

Several short accounts of the history and basic operation of the BBC Monitoring Service have been produced over the years. By far the most significant of these was *Assigned to Listen*, published in 1986. Written by two former wartime monitors, it recalled the early years of the Service's history at its first wartime home near Evesham.¹² These works, especially *Assigned to Listen*, provided valuable insight into the working practices of the Monitoring Service, and into the way of life of its first employees. Narrow in scope, however, the authors did not seek to locate their account of the organisation's work within traditional academic disciplines, nor engage with existing academic debate.

Studies in the field of propaganda and psychological warfare first indicated the historic place and importance of BBC Monitoring. In his study of propaganda during the Second World War, Michael Balfour expressed the need for a good intelligence service to support any effective propaganda campaign, and stated that it was the BBC Monitoring Service, along with press monitoring, which had largely supplied the information for such an intelligence service during the war.¹³ The focus of this work, however, was primarily the study of propaganda itself, and the documents produced by Monitoring were only used as a reference source for this study.¹⁴

Accounts of the BBC itself came closest to including the Monitoring Service within existing academic debate. Asa Briggs' four-volume account of the

¹² John Campbell, *Listening to the world: a lecture* (London: British Broadcasting House, 1967); Alan Thompson, *BBC Monitoring Service: a layman looks at Caversham Park* (Neath: A. Thompson, 1972); Roland A. May, 'The BBC Monitoring Service and its US Partner', *Studies in Intelligence* 2 (1958): <http://www.fqs.org/cia/docs/100/0000606559/THE-BBC-MONITORING-SERVICE-AND-ITS-U.S.-PARTNER.html>, 2 June 2011; Olive Renier & Vladimir Rubinstein, *Assigned to Listen: the Evesham experience, 1939-43* (London: BBC External Services, 1986).

¹³ Michael Balfour, *Propaganda in War, 1939-1945* (London: Routledge, 1979), p.100; Also, Charles Cruickshank, *The Fourth Arm: Psychological Warfare, 1938-1945* (London: Davis-Poynter, 1977), pp.61; 106.

¹⁴ M.R. Doherty, *Nazi Wireless Propaganda: Lord Haw-Haw and British Public Opinion in the Second World War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000); Horst J. P. Bergmeier & Rainer E. Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves: The Inside Story of Nazi Radio Broadcasting and Propaganda Swing* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997); Gerald Kirwin, 'Allied Bombing and Nazi Domestic Propaganda', *European History Quarterly* 15:3 (1985), pp.341-62.

Corporation mentioned the part played by Monitoring in supplying material and guidance for BBC broadcasting, and recounted occasions on which the Monitoring Service had an impact on the wider Corporation. He particularly referred to an occasion when the Monitoring Service was seen to have played a role in the 1942 resignation of BBC Director-General Frederick Ogilvie, and thus in the wartime relationship between the BBC and the Government.¹⁵ W. J. West's exploration of the relationship between the BBC and Government in the lead up to the Second World War, *Truth Betrayed*, also made reference to the later role played by Monitoring within this relationship. He cited, for instance, the involvement of the Monitoring Service in the British authorities' 1940 prosecution of those accused of spreading rumours.¹⁶

During the late 1990s, Gary Rawnsley published an important volume of work on media diplomacy during the Cold War, which further acknowledged the role of BBC Monitoring in the relationship between the BBC and Government. By revealing how both the British and Soviet governments consciously used the media in order to directly address and influence the diplomatic position and behaviour of each other, this work particularly succeeded in locating the role of media monitoring within a framework of international relations. Rawnsley not only made the implicit point that such media diplomacy could not, and would not, have taken place unless systematic broadcast monitoring took place, and was assumed to take place.¹⁷ He also directly hinted at the mediating role that monitoring organisations occupied within the diplomatic process:

[M]onitored broadcasts can structure a particular world-view or reinforce existing doubts and prejudices about an individual nation or state. This is

¹⁵ Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom*, vol. III: *The War of Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970). For a fuller discussion of Ogilvie's resignation refer to pp.107-109.

¹⁶ W.J. West, *Truth Betrayed* (London: Duckworth, 1987), pp.180-181.

¹⁷ Gary D. Rawnsley, *Media Diplomacy: Monitored Broadcasts and Foreign Policy* (Leicester: Centre for the Study of Diplomacy, University of Leicester, 1995), pp.3; 12; Gary D. Rawnsley, *Radio Diplomacy and Propaganda: The BBC and VOA in International Politics, 1956-64* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), p.174; Gary D. Rawnsley, 'Cold War Radio in crisis: The BBC Overseas Services, the Suez crisis and the 1956 Hungarian uprising', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 16:2 (1996), pp.205-206.

especially so if governments are unable to make a clear distinction between media diplomacy and propaganda.¹⁸

This statement, along with his more general warning that monitored broadcasts may provide ‘nothing more useful than a distorted version of reality’, seemed to anticipate, by more than a decade, recent academic interest in the role of culture in international relations and military operations.¹⁹ Rawnsley’s primary interest, however, was on the way in which political leaders communicated power through the media, and on how they interpreted other nation’s attempts to do the same. His recognition of the potential significance of media monitoring organisations within this process did not, therefore, lead him to embark on any detailed investigation into the operation or guiding principles of BBC Monitoring itself.

There has been a similar academic neglect of other media monitoring operations, including the British wartime Foreign Research and Press Service (FRPS) and the United States media monitoring agency, the Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service (FBMS), later the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS). An article on the FRPS appeared in 1986, but it focused primarily on the organisation’s planning for post-war Europe, rather than on its regular newspaper monitoring activities.²⁰ In 1969, former FBIS employee, Joseph E. Roop, also wrote an extensive account of the work of FBIS in its early years but it remained classified until 2009.²¹ The only other academic studies to consider the work of

¹⁸ Rawnsley, *Media Diplomacy*, p.9.

¹⁹ Rawnsley, *Radio Diplomacy and Propaganda*, p.167. Refer to pages 24-26 (below) for a discussion of recent academic developments on the subject of culture in international relations. Growing interest in the role of culture within diplomacy has been particularly demonstrated by the establishment of a recent AHRC funded project based at the University of Bath: ‘Understanding the Role of Cultural Products in Cultural Diplomacy’:

<http://www.bath.ac.uk/polis/networks/role-cultural-products-cultural-diplomacy/index.html>, 27 Jan. 2013.

²⁰ The Foreign Research and Press Service was a unit established by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, at Balliol College, Oxford. Under the directorship of Dr Arnold Toynbee, the unit supplied weekly reviews of the Foreign and Dominions Press and provided a source of information on the background to current problems. (Robert H. Keyserlingk, ‘Arnold Toynbee’s Foreign Research and Press Service, 1939-43 and Its Post-War Plans for South-East Europe’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 21:4 (1986), pp. 539-558.)

²¹ Joseph E. Roop, *Foreign Broadcast Information Service History, Part 1: 1941 – 1947* (1969), p.4: <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/foreign-broadcast-information-service/index.html>, 27 May 2011.

FBIS assessed the analytical work of the wartime Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which controlled FBIS. Published both in the two years following the end of the Second World War, and again in the late 1950s, it sought to assess the framework of propaganda analysis undertaken by FCC analysts, in order to devise guidelines on which future media analysis could develop.²² The fact that this work did not lead to further study of media monitoring can be attributed to the lack of an academic field, for many years, which incorporated or encouraged such study, once the approach of propaganda analysis had been abandoned.²³

Literature on OSINT and Media Monitoring, 2000 - 2012

This long academic neglect of media monitoring organisations has begun to be cautiously redressed since the turn of the millennium, inspired by growing academic and public policy interest in Open Source Intelligence.

Intelligence theory, undeveloped as it was during the second half of the twentieth century, did not prevent the inclusion of open sources within intelligence studies. Although the ‘traditional’ view of intelligence was based on the penetrating of an adversary’s secrets in order to gain an advantage over them, a new theory developed in the post-war years, led by American intelligence professional, Sherman Kent. Instead of the discovery of ‘secrets’, intelligence came to be defined in terms of the process of analysis, which could transform information gained from any source into usable intelligence.²⁴ Within this ‘all-source’ framework, open sources could thus be theoretically considered in the same way as secret. They could, in other words, be fitted into the stages of a theoretical intelligence cycle, involving, not just collection but also, ‘requirements analysis, information filtering, and the analysis and integration of information after it has

²² Bernard Berelson & Sebastian de Grazia, ‘Detecting Collaboration in Propaganda’, *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 11:2 (1947), pp.241-253; Alexander L. George, *Propaganda Analysis: A Study of Inferences made from Nazi Propaganda in World War II* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1959); Alexander L. George, ‘Prediction of Political Action By Means of Propaganda Analysis’, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 20:1 (1956), pp.334-345.

²³ There has been a recent attempt to resurrect the study of propaganda analysis: Garth Jowett & Victoria O’Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 4th ed. (London: Sage, 2006), pp.269-287.

²⁴ Adam N. Shulsky & Gary J. Schmitt, *Silent Warfare: Understanding the World of Intelligence*, 3rd ed. (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2002), pp.159-163.

been collected.’²⁵ This ‘all-source’ conception of intelligence was crucial to the establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and control of the United States’ open source agency FBIS was placed under the directorship of the CIA from its foundation in 1947.²⁶ Intelligence professionals thus recognised the importance of publicly available information to their work. In 1947, Allen W. Dulles, future Director of the CIA, judged that open sources could provide 80% of the Agency’s information requirements.²⁷ William Casey, Director of Central Intelligence from 1981 to 1987, went further, declaring that the President and other senior policy officials got as much as 90% of the intelligence they used from daily media reporting and analysis.²⁸

It was, however, the rapid political and technological developments that have taken place since the end of the Cold War, which has led to a surge of interest in open sources. The development of the Internet, combined with the breakdown of the Cold War political order and the introduction of Freedom of Information legislation, resulted in a huge expansion in the volume of publicly available information. It specifically led, in the words of Stevyn Gibson, to a narrowing of ‘the information gap between what governments know, through all-source means and what its citizens know through open-source means.’²⁹ This resulted in both a proliferation of private providers of intelligence, who only used open sources (i.e. private providers of OSINT), and also in increased calls for national governments’ to more fully exploit the information and expertise available in the open source arena.³⁰

²⁵ Dorothy E. Denning, *Information Warfare and Security* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1999), p.79.

²⁶ Stephen C. Mercado, ‘Reexamining the Distinction Between Open Sources and Secrets’, *Studies in Intelligence* 49:2 (2005).

²⁷ Robert David Steele, ‘The Open Source Program: Missing in Action’, *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 21:3 (2008), p.610.

²⁸ William E Odom, ‘Intelligence Analysis’, *Intelligence and National Security* 23:3 (2008), p.325; Hamilton Bean, ‘The DNI’s Open Source Center: An Organizational Communication Perspective’, *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 20:2 (2007), p.252.

²⁹ Stevyn D. Gibson, ‘In the Eye of the Perfect Storm: Re-Imagining, Reforming and Refocusing Intelligence for Risk, Globalisation and Changing Societal Expectation’, *Risk Management* 7:4 (2005), pp.37; 27; Also, Donald L Madill, ‘Producing Intelligence from Open Sources’, *Military Intelligence* 3:4 (2005), p.23.

³⁰ Wilhelm Agrell, ‘The Next 100 Years? Reflections on the Future of Intelligence’, *Intelligence and National Security* 27:1 (2012), p.132; G. M. McGill, ‘OSCINT and the Private Information Sector’, *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 7:4 (1994), pp.442-443.

The initial academic work on OSINT was thus policy driven and loosely theoretical, rather than historical. Former US intelligence officer Robert David Steele, for instance, has been an uncompromising advocate for OSINT since the late 1980s. In order to deal with the fact that the volume of publicly available open sources had reached the point where, as Arthur Hulnick expressed it, ‘there is just too much material to be absorbed’, Steele argued that the US Government should restructure national intelligence.³¹ He has particularly advocated the adoption of an open source model of intelligence, by which the government would both exploit the expertise available in the non-government arena, including that offered by private OSINT producers, and also share information with this private arena.³² A number of other authors have also more recently called for the adoption of a collaborative model of intelligence.³³

There have been resulting intelligence reforms to increase the use of open sources throughout the intelligence community, government and military, particularly in the USA.³⁴ This notably included the 2005 establishment of the Open Source Centre, a new office within the Directorate of National Intelligence, which is dedicated to the exploitation of open sources and based on the former FBIS.³⁵

Over the last decade, this recognition of the contemporary value of open sources has finally begun to initiate historic research into the past production and role of OSINT, particularly media monitoring.

³¹ Arthur S. Hulnick, ‘The Dilemma of Open Sources Intelligence: Is OSINT Really Intelligence?’, in Loch K. Johnson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of National Security Intelligence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.133.

³² Robert David Steele, ‘Private enterprise intelligence: Its potential contribution to national security’, *Intelligence and National Security* 10:4 (1995), pp.212-228.

³³ Josh Kerbel & Anthony Olcott, ‘Synthezing with Clients, Not Analyzing for Customers’, *Studies in intelligence* 54:4 (2010), p.5; Roger Z. George, ‘Meeting 21st Century Transnational Challenges: Building a Global Intelligence Paradigm’, *Studies in Intelligences* 51:3 (2007), pp.1-9.

³⁴ Richard H. Immerman, ‘Transforming Intelligence: The Intelligence Community’s Best Kept Secret’, *Intelligence and National Security* 26:2-3 (2011), pp.159-181. Also see articles in special issue of *Military Intelligence* on Open Sources: *Military Intelligence* 31:4 (2005).

³⁵ Open Source Centre Website:

<https://www.cia.gov/news-information/press-releases-statements/press-release-archive-2005/pr11082005.html>, 1 Nov. 2008.

The first such studies examined the work of FBIS and FRPS, rather than BBC Monitoring. In a 2001 article, entitled 'Open-Source Intelligence from the Airwaves', Stephen Mercado examined the establishment and basic operation of FBIS during the Second World War. The article revealed the difficulties faced by the organisation in employing those with necessary linguistic expertise, due to historic reservations regarding the employment of those with foreign connections in intelligence work.³⁶ Isabelle Tombs' 2002 account of the work of the French section of FRPS during the Second World War similarly uncovered historic concerns regarding security. In this case, however, these were due to the initial location of FRPS within the non-governmental Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA). Her study offered insights into how, 'ideas from 'outside' were drawn on within an 'informal' organisation', and concluded by noting the dual purpose performed by the wartime organisation, in both contributing to the war of words and helping bodies in London to keep in touch with developments in France.³⁷ A 2003 article by Robert Pringle on US intelligence analysis of the Soviet media during the period of Glasnost also contributed to the growing academic literature on media monitoring. It provided a historic instance of when the open source arena was an intelligence target in its own right, and offered some interesting reflections on the value and limitations of using open sources.³⁸

The first academic study dedicated exclusively to an examination of the BBC Monitoring Service was a 2007 article by Alban Webb and Catherine Haddon, which examined a reorganisation of Monitoring that had taken place in 2005. The authors argued that the real value of BBCM lay in its global scope, enabled by a fairly equal partnership with the US. Cuts that would reduce this global capability, Webb and Haddon warned, would result in a gradual diminution of the value of BBCM to its stakeholders and subscribers.³⁹ Given that BBCM is still facing funding difficulties, and that these are now beginning to affect the scope and flexibility of the institution, Webb and Haddon's reflections as to the

³⁶ Stephen C. Mercado, 'Open-Source Intelligence From the Airwaves: FBIS Against the Axis, 1941-1945', *Studies in Intelligence*, 11 (2001), pp.33-43.

³⁷ Isabelle Tombs, 'Scrutinizing France: collecting and using newspaper intelligence during World War II', *Intelligence and National Security* 17:2 (2002), pp.105-126.

³⁸ Robert W. Pringle, 'The Limits of OSINT: Diagnosing the Soviet Media, 1985-1989', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 16:2 (2001), pp.280-289.

³⁹ Webb & Haddon, 'Internal Housekeeping Matter', pp.214-223.

institutional value of Monitoring are as relevant as ever.⁴⁰ Although the role of BBC Monitoring during the Cold War was briefly considered, building on the work of Rawnsley, the article did not however examine the origins or past operation of the Service in any detail.

There have been three more recent academic studies, which have examined specific aspects of BBC Monitoring. Michael Goodman has looked into the role of the Monitoring Service in the relationship between the BBC and Government during the Cold War. He has thus expanded on those early references to the Monitoring Service included in works dedicated to the BBC. He particularly related the details of the reorganisation of the Service that had taken place in the immediate post-war period, and commented on the dual use of monitored material to both inform ‘propaganda’ and provide ‘intelligence’.⁴¹ An article by Laura Calkins on the historic relationship between FBIS and BBC Monitoring placed the collaboration within a wider context of US-UK intelligence sharing, which also involved sharing of signals intelligence. The work is strongest in its examination of the initial post-war reorganisation of the Monitoring Service, also touched on by Goodman. Like Goodman, Calkins also asserted that the post-war agreement ensured the long-term continuance of the dual value of Monitoring, in providing a source of ‘intelligence’ for the Government and ‘news’ for the BBC.⁴²

Finally, Kalev Leetaru has recently written of the potential value of digital FBIS and BBC Monitoring collections for conducting cross-national content analysis.⁴³ As the author stated, ‘the scholarly community’s lack of familiarity with open source methods and the FBIS collection in particular, has limited academic use of the FBIS archive’. He thus sought to illustrate what could be

⁴⁰ BBCM Financial Review, 1Apr. – 31 Mar. 2011,

<http://www.monitor.bbc.co.uk/BBCM%20Year%20End%20Report.pdf>, 31 May 2012.

⁴¹ Michael Goodman, ‘British Intelligence and the British Broadcasting Corporation: A Snapshot of a Happy Marriage’, in Robert Dover & Michael Goodman (eds.) *Spinning Intelligence: Why Intelligence Needs the Media, Why the Media Needs Intelligence* (London: Hurst, 2009), pp.117-132.

⁴² Laura M. Calkins, ‘Patrolling the Ether: US-UK Open Source Intelligence Cooperation and the BBC’s Emergence as an Intelligence Agency, 1939-1948’, *Intelligence and National Security*, 26:1 (2011), pp. 1–22.

⁴³ Kalev Leetaru, ‘The Scope of FBIS and BBC Open-Source Media Coverage’, *Studies in Intelligence* 54:1 (2010), pp.17-37.

done with the digitised sources produced by the BBC, since 1979, and by FBIS, since 1993.⁴⁴ In its social science approach, this article is reminiscent of the academic work conducted in the late 1940s and 1950s that examined the efforts of wartime propaganda analysis. This article further made it clear that if FBIS and BBCM archives are to be used more frequently in future, it will be necessary to gain a greater understanding of the collection priorities and processes of the organisations that formed them during specific historic periods.

The literature on media monitoring produced since the start of the new millennium has increased academic awareness of the historic existence of the BBC Monitoring Service, FBIS and FRPS, and provided some valuable reflections on the operation, role and value of media monitoring. Most importantly this work has implicitly acknowledged the value of an historical approach to studying OSINT. The aim of this study is precisely to fill an existing gap in historical research, by providing a detailed account of the origins and past operation of the Monitoring Service during the Second World War. The justification of an historic approach to studying OSINT has three aspects.

Firstly, it reflects the conception that intelligence studies in general need to be based on historical study of the past operation of intelligence. This approach, particularly pioneered by Christopher Andrew, has not been universally accepted.⁴⁵ In fact there has been a definite sense in much of the dedicated theoretical OSINT literature produced over the past twenty years, that information and political conditions have been so transformed in recent years as to completely destroy old dynamics, definitions and institutional roles, thus making the past no longer relevant. Arthur Hulnick put both sides of this argument most starkly in relation to OSINT when he considered the continued need for intelligence professionals as intermediaries. Hulnick stated that policy officials were now ‘all computer literate and quite capable, if they have time, of seeking open sources without outside help’. He also recognised, however, that

⁴⁴ Leetaru, ‘Scope of FBIS and BBC Coverage’, p.21.

⁴⁵ Andrew & Dilks, *The Missing Dimension*; Andrew, ‘Intelligence, International Relations and ‘Under-theorisation’’, pp.170-184; Christopher Andrew, ‘Intelligence analysis needs to look backwards before looking forward’, *History & Policy* (June 2004): <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-23.html>, 31 May 2012.

policy makers frequently did not have the time available to seek and assess relevant open sources.⁴⁶ Wyn Bowen has also recently stated that ‘the process of identifying assessing and validating relevant open source information is very time consuming.’⁴⁷ The continued existence of national intelligence organisations, the growth of private intelligence providers and the development of dedicated OSINT agencies, like the US Open Source Centre, initially appears to support a view that governments, organisations and companies still require intermediary services to distil information for them as much, if not more, than ever. If lessons about OSINT are to be drawn from history, however, it is necessary to examine the working operation of open source agencies more closely than the existing studies have so far achieved. As yet there has been no attempt to consider how BBC Monitoring Service employees approached their work, how collection priorities were established, or how material was presented, shaped and selected by the organisation. In other words there has been no attempt to account for the most crucial element of modern discussions regarding OSINT, how the organisation historically managed and distilled information.

Secondly, the recent studies of media monitoring agencies have revealed the existence and potential impact of media monitoring operations in history. Christopher Andrew has recently argued that it is necessary to consider the past role of OSINT alongside the role of secret intelligence in order to prevent distortion.⁴⁸ The existing literature on BBC Monitoring has echoed the official documentation of the organisation, that it provided a source of intelligence for the Government and news or propaganda for the BBC. There has, however, been no attempt to trace the channels - documents, committees and correspondence - through which material monitored by the BBC circulated and had influence. Without establishing the channels and methods by which BBCM influenced Government discussions, assessments and decision-making, or BBC news or propaganda output, then there is no hope of encouraging non-intelligence historians to assess and incorporate the historic role of the Monitoring Service in

⁴⁶ Hulnick, ‘Dilemma of Open Sources’, p.133.

⁴⁷ Wyn Q. Bowen, ‘Open Source Intelligence and Nuclear Safeguards’, in *Spinning Intelligence*, p.102.

⁴⁸ Christopher Andrew, ‘The Case for Intelligence History’ at German Historical Institute London conference ‘Keeping Secrets: How Important was Intelligence to the Conduct of International Relations from 1915-1989?’ 17-19 Apr. 2008.

their studies. There is thus a danger that BBC monitored material, like OSINT generally, will just continue to be seen as a source of ‘background’ or ‘contextual’ information.⁴⁹

Thirdly, as Kalev Leetaru’s study particularly illustrated, it is necessary to establish how the Monitoring Service selected and shaped material during different time periods in order to assist future researchers to assess the value, scope and limitations of the BBC Monitoring archives themselves. Against this background, this thesis charts new territory as it will be the first study to establish the collection priorities and detailed working operation of the BBC Monitoring Service for the Second World War period.

Translation and Language

It is acknowledged in the standard intelligence literature that the output of single-source collection agencies cannot truly be considered ‘raw material’, for it, in the words of Michael Herman, ‘incorporates substantial analysis and interpretation.’⁵⁰ Few works, however, have actually considered the practical affect this has on the material they produce, or on later analysis. The impression is rather given, for example in the many works on Bletchley Park, that although there was undoubted individual genius involved in breaking codes, once cracked the Service essentially produced untainted raw material. Material understood, weighed and analysed by more widely informed individuals outside the organisation. This conception has begun to slowly change in recent years and one of the aspects to be investigated has been the process of translation.⁵¹ This is particularly relevant to a study of BBC Monitoring, because a primary purpose of the Monitoring Service, both in the past and present, has been to translate the world’s media into English.

⁴⁹ Shulsky & Schmitt, *Silent Warfare*, p.38.

⁵⁰ Michael Herman, *Intelligence Power in Peace and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.41.

⁵¹ See work of ‘Languages at War’ project. The project website also includes an extensive bibliography of relevant work: <http://www.reading.ac.uk/languages-at-war/lw-booklist.aspx>, 30 Mar. 2012.

The role and impact of translation has been a widely neglected factor within history and international relations. Literature on OSINT, however, has paid slightly more attention to the issue, because the fact that open sources are in a large variety of languages presents real obstacles to their free exploitation for intelligence purposes. The solutions proposed for dealing with the variety of languages involved have primarily been twofold. Firstly, the use of machine translation, and the improvement of translation software, has been advocated. Secondly, proponents of the open source model of intelligence have stated that governments should exploit the linguistic expertise available in the private sector.⁵²

It is beyond the scope of this study to assess the capabilities of machine translation. By examining the role that monitors, employed as linguists, actually fulfilled at a time before machine translation became an option, this study may however exemplify some of the difficulties involved in completely replacing human language expertise. These difficulties may partly originate from one of the unifying conclusions of recent work that has investigated the historic role of language workers: that the duties of people employed as translators or interpreters has generally far exceeded the verbatim translation of text or speech.⁵³ Even in cases where the translation of texts and speech is truly all that is required, serious challenges may still be posed to the replacement of skilled linguists. As Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet have recently commented, machine translation may be appropriate for certain items, such as scientific texts, where parallel passages in source language and translated language correspond to parallel thought processes.⁵⁴ Languages, however, frequently do not correspond in this way.

Underlying these questions exist long running debates about the origins and nature of language that concern the very possibility of translation itself. One

⁵² Robert David Steele, 'The importance of open source intelligence to the military', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 8:4 (1995), pp.457-470; Mercado, 'FBIS Against the Axis', pp.45-55.

⁵³ 'The role of Interpreters, Translators and Linguists in Conflict', Languages at War Workshop, Imperial War Museum, London, 29 May 2009.

⁵⁴ Jean-Paul Vinay & Jean Darbelnet, 'A Methodology for Translation', in Lawrence Venuti (ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.87.

approach views translation as possible because a universal structure of language exists, which enables any concept to be expressed in any language. Language is thus seen as a state of mind, which allows for free thought and self-expression.⁵⁵ It does not, however, necessarily follow from this perception of language that point-for-point translations exist between different surface tongues. So this view still presents serious challenges for automated translation.⁵⁶

Given that intelligence theorists have also recently claimed that ‘language [is] an indispensable source of cultural information’, it is also worth considering one of the most influential historic hypotheses of an alternate view, which linked language to culture, and, in the extreme, denied the possibility of real translation.⁵⁷ The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is often termed determinist, as it suggested that our language determines our thoughts and perceptions of the world. Whorf thus saw culture as equivalent to language, and termed the differing perceptions that arise in different linguistic communities, ‘thought worlds’. Those who believe thought processes are influenced by language, also tend to believe that studying a language can tell you about the way individuals within that linguistic community perceive the world.⁵⁸ The Whorfian conception of language and culture, even if correct in its contention about how language initially developed, has nevertheless been significantly eroded by the processes of internationalisation and globalisation, which have led to growing linguistic complexity across most parts of the globe.⁵⁹

If language is to provide a valuable source of cultural information it is thus necessary to adopt a more fragmented understanding of culture than Whorf proclaimed; in particular it requires that culture can be separated from language.

⁵⁵ Siobhan Chapman, *Thinking About Language: Theories of English* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp.38-54.

⁵⁶ George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.110.

⁵⁷ Jeannie L. Johnson & Matthew T. Bennett, ‘Cultural Topography: A New Research Tool for Intelligence Analysis’, *Studies in Intelligence* 55:2 (2011), pp.11-12.

⁵⁸ Chapman, pp.108-111; Steiner, pp.76-77.

⁵⁹ Karen Risager, ‘Towards a Transnational Paradigm in Language and Culture Pedagogy’, Paper read at the AAAL 2008 Annual Conference, Washington DC, USA, Mar. 2008: http://ruc-dk.academia.edu/KarenRisager/Papers/123914/Towards_a_transnational_paradigm_in_language_and_culture_pedagogy, 29 Mar. 2012; Also see discussion of post-structuralism: Karen Risager, *Language and Culture: Global Flows and Local Complexity* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2006), pp.120-121.

In her study of the relationship between language and culture, linguist Karen Risager thus recently assigned the term ‘language’ to mean linguistically formed culture, and ‘culture’ to mean non-linguistically formed culture.⁶⁰ Language may still offer insights into culture, but the relationship between the two is far more nuanced. This is partly because language itself can be changed and manipulated. Indeed a significant strand of recent academic work on translation, for instance postcolonial translation theory, has been on just this subject of the relationship between language and power.⁶¹ Thus, in relation to the media, the language used, for instance, by a state-controlled source, may provide, as Jeannie Johnson and Matthew Bennett have suggested, illuminations as to ‘the identity, norms and values that the state hopes to achieve, as well as the narrative it hopes will dominate popular perception.’⁶²

In a recent study of the impact of foreign languages on the work of the wartime Bletchley Park, Hilary Footitt made one very applicable comment in this regard, when she called for the need to ‘problematise’ the role of foreign languages:

Failing to problematise the role of foreign languages could for example perpetuate an illusion that the exercise of translation is an automatic and transparent one. It may serve to mask the extent to which translating itself can domesticate a foreign text, screening out key aspects of its foreignness, a process which could encourage recipients of translation to maintain a type of cultural parochialism in which translated texts tend to be compared with what is known rather than provoking speculation on what may be as yet unknown.⁶³

For non-speakers of any language to gain a sense of the cultural information conveyed within a passage in that language, demands careful, nuanced translation. The Monitoring Service, and its former US partner FBIS, have historically provided consumers with just such a translation service of the world’s media. As Kalev Leetaru has commented, these organisations offered: ‘a unique iterative translation process [that] emphasises preserving the minute

⁶⁰ Risager, *Language and Culture*, pp.5-6.

⁶¹ For an introduction to postcolonial translation studies, see Jeremy Mundy, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications* 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008), pp.131-134.

⁶² Johnson & Bennett, ‘Cultural Topography’, p.12.

⁶³ Hilary Footitt, ‘Another Missing Dimension? Foreign Languages in World War II Intelligence’, *Intelligence and National Security* 25:3 (2010), p.289.

nuances of vernacular content, capturing the subtleties of domestic reaction.⁶⁴ This study will show how wartime monitors themselves historically problematised translation; a process conceived as historically inseparable from the task of monitoring. This study thus fully problematises the operation of BBC Monitoring itself during the war.

Thesis Structure

The structure of this thesis is not strictly chronological. It begins with a chapter examining the positioning of the Monitoring Service within Britain's wartime establishment, before continuing in the second chapter to recount the initial formation of the organisation.

The first chapter aims to establish the role and positioning of the BBC Monitoring Service within the prosecution of Britain's information, political and military war. The first section will trace the wartime analysis and use of monitored material by government departments and agencies, as well as by the BBC. It seeks to both justify and inform an examination of the wartime Monitoring Service, and encourage future study of monitoring within different academic narratives and fields of study. The second section of this chapter will examine the analytical work carried out by the BBC Monitoring Service at the beginning of the war. The purpose, approach, use and value, as well as the reasons for the termination of this work, will all be established. This chapter will further begin to consider what impact the wartime relationship between the BBC and the Government had on the value of the Monitoring Service's work, and, conversely, consider what impact the positioning of the Monitoring Service had on the wartime relationship between the Government and the BBC.

The second chapter will outline the history of pre-war monitoring enterprises and examine how the wartime Monitoring Service came to be established under the auspices of the BBC. It will use official documentation and correspondence to

⁶⁴ Kalev H. Leetaru, 'Cultromics 2.0: Forecasting large-scale human behaviour using global news media tone in time and space', *First Monday: Peer-Reviewed Journal on the Internet* 16:9 (2011), <http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/3663/3040>, 29 Mar. 2012.

trace the organisational development and expansion of the Service throughout the war. Consideration will be given to a number of covert tasks undertaken by BBC Monitoring in addition to their regular duties. Finally, the chapter will examine the distribution of monitored material to customers outside of the British Government, and consider the influence of the BBC on the development of broadcast monitoring in the United States.

The third chapter will demonstrate the scope and scale of the BBC Monitoring Service's broadcast coverage as it developed throughout the war. It will consider how requests received from the British Government, the BBC, and the Governments of other countries shaped the Service's monitoring schedule and output. Requests for both the recording of particular types of broadcast content, and for the monitoring of particular broadcast transmissions, will be examined separately. Within the wartime context of limited resources, this chapter will finally address the importance of dialogue between the Monitoring Service and its consumers.

The fourth chapter will explore the development and complexity of monitoring as a profession. It will draw on former monitors' reflections to examine how their previous experience, expertise, and perceptions regarding their newly assigned task, influenced the development of monitoring at the BBC. It will further use examples, drawn from the Imperial War Museum's Monitoring Service collection, to illustrate the complexities of three different aspects of the monitor's role: listening, translation and selection. The impact on the Monitoring Service's work of both wartime concerns for security, and contemporary beliefs regarding organisational management, will further be considered.

The remaining chapters will examine the operational procedures and collection priorities of BBC Monitoring during three discrete time periods throughout the Second World War. Whereas the previous chapters are primarily based on official documentation and correspondence and on the personal reflections of former employees, these case study chapters will be based on the analysis and comparison of BBC Monitoring transcripts and printed documents.

The decision to write case study chapters was determined by the scale of IWM's BBC Monitoring Service archive. In no other way would it have been possible to judge BBCM's collection priorities or editorial criteria in any detail. Secondly, despite the fact these case study chapters were directed, in the first instance, by the archives themselves, having a prior awareness of the events of the periods studied, as gained from historical literature, allowed the decisions of the wartime Service to be more readily identified and critically assessed.

Selecting short, discrete time periods for which the printed Digests could be compared with the original transcripts made by monitors further allowed for greater variety in the sets of language transmissions that could be considered. Excepting the first case study period, for which a relatively small volume of material was produced, it was necessary to focus solely on reports of broadcasting from Germany and German-occupied territory. Part two of the Daily Digests, which covered broadcasting from elsewhere, are thus not considered in detail for the later case studies, as reports of German-controlled transmissions were all edited into part one. Nevertheless, comparing how a larger number of different sets of transmissions from Germany – for instance those in German, English, Italian and Spanish - were reported and edited by BBCM is valuable in indicating the organisation's collection priorities and beliefs regarding their wartime role.

The first case study will examine the first twenty days of the Monitoring Service's operation from 29 August to 17 September 1939. This period includes the German invasion of Poland, the declarations of war by Britain and France, and the Soviet invasion of Poland from the east. The second case study will consider the ten-day period from 4 June to 14 June 1940, which began with the final Allied evacuation of troops from Dunkirk, and also witnessed the entry of Italy into the war. The third case study will examine the ten-day period from 1 June to 10 June 1944, which saw the D-Day Allied landings in Normandy, the entry of American troops into Rome and continuing operations on the Soviet Front.

The decision not to undertake further case studies was driven by the focus of the thesis itself. The primary aim is not to examine the events of the war or their media representation. Neither is it to demonstrate how the collection priorities and editorial decisions of BBCM influenced the particular decision-making or policy choices made during key events in the war. The focus of the thesis is rather on the operation of the Monitoring Service itself, and on how they selected, shaped and communicated information to consumers, thus creating a wartime role for themselves. Having conducted the research and written a preliminary draft of a fourth case study chapter on the Battle of Britain, I found that, although historically interesting, it added very little to an understanding of how the Monitoring Service actually operated or selected and treated information. This was because no major institutional change had taken place during this period that could not adequately be examined in the two surrounding studies. Including this additional chapter would have meant reducing the word count and level of detailed examination of the other time periods, or of the preceding chapters. Adding more case studies again would have exacerbated this problem, making the analysis shallower whilst adding little of value to the central thesis.

The three case study periods that were finally selected for inclusion here were chosen for three reasons. Firstly, they reflect developments in the operation of the Monitoring Service. Taken together these chapters will enable an assessment as to the formalisation of monitoring procedures as the Service expanded, suggest other paths the Service could have taken, and finally demonstrate those aspects of monitoring that remained dependent on individual assessment and expertise. Secondly, the dates of these case study chapters have been chosen to examine the continuities and differences in the type of information the Monitoring Service provided during different political and military strategic points throughout the war. At the beginning of the war, the Monitoring Service was only just established and little known by consumers, compared with its importance by the time of Dunkirk, when the Allies were on the strategic defensive, and by D-Day, when they were on the strategic offensive. Finally, the specific dates of the case studies have been selected because they were in a sense crisis points throughout the war. This has two valuable implications for a

historic study of BBC Monitoring. Firstly, it means that there is already a wide historiography for the events of these periods. This will allow for the collection priorities of the Service to be assessed more appropriately, and may further encourage incorporation of the role of BBC Monitoring, or the records they left behind, in future studies of these events. Secondly, crisis points in the war have been chosen because they strained the normal operation and resources of the Service and thus offer to reveal the order of monitoring priorities better.

Sources

This thesis is primarily based on study of the Imperial War Museum's BBC Monitoring Service archives, comprising their transcript, Digest and index collections. It makes especial use of the large collection of Monitoring Service transcripts, which cover the period from 1939 to 1980. Whereas the BBC Monitoring Service edited 'Digests' are available elsewhere, in both hard copy and microfilm, IWM is the only institution to hold copies of the monitors' transcripts on which these documents were originally based. In order to assess the wartime Monitoring Service's collection priorities and editorial criteria, this study compares the content and style of the transcripts to that of the Digests. Such an assessment should assist future researchers to assess the scope and content of the transcript archives and may encourage future research into this remarkable, underused collection.

This study could thus be viewed as fitting into modern approaches to archives themselves. Classically defined as either evidence of business processes or records for the illumination of history, they have also begun, in a trend beginning with Theodore Shellenberg in the second half of the twentieth century, to be regarded, 'as story, as narrative, as part of a societal and governance process of remembering and forgetting'.⁶⁵ This study will begin to tell the story of the creation of a neglected archive. In so doing, it will implicitly suggest different

⁶⁵ Terry Cook, '“We Are What We Keep; We Keep What We Are”: Archival Appraisal Past, Present and Future', *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 32:2 (2011), p.179; Natalie Ceeney, 'The Role of a 21st-century National Archive', *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 29:1 (2008), pp.57-71.

historical and theoretical contexts and narratives to which the archive offers to contribute in future.

In addition to the IWM BBC Monitoring Service collections, this thesis makes use of records drawn from The National Archives, the BBC Written Archives Centre and Chatham House Archives, as well as using oral interviews conducted with former Monitoring Service employees, memoir and autobiographical literature, and IWM and British Library Sound Archives.

Files from The National Archives have been used to examine the pre-war decision to establish the BBC Monitoring Service and also to trace the use and analysis of BBC monitored material during the war. Ministry of Information files, drawn from the INF series, have been used most extensively to examine the establishment of the Service, and this series has been searched extensively for all references to BBC Monitoring. Other TNA series, including Foreign Office, Cabinet Office, Home Office and Admiralty records, have been used to trace the circulation, use and analysis of BBCM material by the wartime British Government. It is difficult to trace the impact of BBC monitored material throughout the Government, because the existence of references to the Monitoring Service is frequently not mentioned in the catalogue descriptions of files. In contrast to the INF series, other TNA files were only consulted when indicated by the search engine or when a file heading or catalogue description looked particularly promising. While this thesis is based on an in-depth study of a vast array of primary source material, there could therefore be additional relevant uncatalogued documentation in the TNA relating to the wartime Monitoring Service.

All released BBC Written Archives Centre files relating to the Monitoring Service during the Second World War period have been comprehensively searched. This material has been used to trace the administrative development of the Monitoring Service, including staffing issues, and has provided a record of official guidelines regarding monitoring procedure. The archive also contained files of correspondence between the BBC Monitoring Service and their customers, which have allowed for an assessment of the collection priority

setting of the Service and provided a further indication of the historic use of monitored material.

Chatham House archives have been used to examine a pre-war experiment in broadcast monitoring conducted by the Royal Institute of International Affairs. The archives also contained copies of the BBC Monitoring Service Weekly Analyses, Special Studies in Broadcast Propaganda, and records relating to BBC listener research, which are all considered in the first chapter of this study. Chatham House further provided some relevant material on the history of the establishment of collaboration in broadcast monitoring between the UK and US.

In addition to written archival sources, this study has made use of perhaps the last remaining opportunity to gather, by means of oral interview, the reflections and insights of former Monitoring Service employees as to their wartime work. To supplement this, memoir and autobiographical literature as well as the records of previously conducted interviews with BBC Monitoring employees, held by the British Library and IWM, have been used. Care has been taken to triangulate any factual information drawn from oral interviews or memoir literature, against both the official BBC documents held by the Written Archives Centre, and against IWM's BBC Monitoring Service archives, which represent the records produced by the organisation in the course of its regular operation. The real value of these sources, however, has not been in the specific pieces of factual information gained, but in the illumination they have provided as to how monitors considered and approached their wartime work and how they translated official instructions and guidelines into practice.

Chapter 1

Locating the BBC Monitoring Service: Analysis and Applications

Means of communication have been so swiftly expanded since the last war, and public opinion on the subject of war has been so widely developed, that “information” is likely to play a much more important part in any future war than it did in 1914.¹

Thus began a 1937 note on planning for the future wartime Ministry of Information. Information, in its many facets, was to play a central role in the war to come, and the BBC Monitoring Service was to play an important role in this information war. The aim of this thesis is to examine, and specifically to problematise, the regular operation and output of the BBC Monitoring Service. This chapter, however, seeks to locate the role of BBC Monitoring within an historic intelligence process, and establish the institution within the wartime dynamic between the BBC and Government. It is slightly unusual not to begin this study with an account of the initial formation of the Monitoring Service. By first tracing the broader picture within which BBC Monitoring operated during the war, however, this chapter aims to both justify the subsequent problematisation of monitoring, and allow for greater understanding of the significance of the collection priorities and monitoring techniques developed by the Service. In accordance with recent literature that has sought to challenge the validity of the classic intelligence cycle, the intelligence process in which BBC Monitoring played a part will be explored in all its complexity, rather than being viewed as part of a strictly linear or circular process.² The findings of this chapter will thus both indicate the kinds of intelligence produced by the Monitoring Service and consider what impact the positioning of the Monitoring Service, within the BBC, had on the value of its wartime work.

¹¹ Note on Ministry of Information (MoI), by Stephen Tallents, n.d. (c. Aug. 1937), TNA INF 1/329.

² Arthur S. Hulnick, ‘What’s wrong with the Intelligence Cycle’, *Intelligence and National Security* 21:6 (2006), pp.959-979.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section will begin by considering how the wartime departments and agencies involved in the conduct of British publicity and propaganda used material produced by BBC Monitoring. Attention will be given to the propaganda analyses conducted by these departments using BBCM material, often alongside other sources. These analyses took a direction that made them of interest to a number of other government departments involved in the prosecution of the war. The manner in which other government departments made use of these propaganda analyses, and of original material prepared by BBCM, will also be considered within this section.

The second section of this chapter will firstly examine how the BBC analysed monitored reports, to both assist the regular work of the Monitoring Service, and to help consumers interpret the material they produced at the beginning of the war. In contrast to the documents prepared by government agencies, the BBC used monitoring as the only or major source for their analysis. This section will thus examine the particular analytical framework developed by the BBC Monitoring Service Research Section and consider how their approach drew from, and contributed to, contemporary sociological research in the field of propaganda analysis. Secondly, this section will consider how the BBC's analytical work influenced Britain's wartime broadcasting strategy and also provided the information content necessary to improve the quality of individual broadcast transmissions. This discussion will conclude by considering the reasons for the ultimate failure of the BBC's wartime attempt to develop its own large-scale intelligence section, based around Monitoring and listener research.

Section 1: Governmental Analysis and Usage

The BBC was initially given the authority to establish a separate wartime Monitoring Service in order to supply information to the Collection Division of the future Ministry of Information. The term collection was viewed as 'merely a synonym for intelligence' amongst MoI planners and the man in charge of

Ministry planning, Sir Stephen Tallents, actually wished to change the name of the department to the 'Intelligence Division'.³

Two issues prominent in pre-war planning for the MoI Collection Division ensured that the BBC would play a central role in the supply of intelligence, to both the wartime departments charged with conducting Britain's information war, and to a wide-range of other consumers with differing remits. Firstly, it was repeatedly stated in pre-war planning documents that the Ministry should limit their own staff requirements as much as possible and instead make use of information collected by other government departments and existing external agencies.⁴ Planning initially concentrated on the collation of printed sources, but in late 1938 it was recognised that the task of tracking and immediately countering enemy propaganda could be conducted most quickly and efficiently through the medium of radio.⁵ The attention of Ministry planners was therefore directed towards the monitoring already being conducted on a small scale by the BBC, which if developed would save them the responsibility of developing and sustaining a large-scale monitoring operation of their own. Secondly, it was repeatedly recognised that information collected and collated for the Ministry's own purposes could have considerable value outside the department:

[I]t might be vital to the Government in those early days to know what an enemy Government was telling both its own people and other countries about the issues at stake. This appears clearly to be a service which, required of the Collecting Division for Ministry of Information purposes, should also be made of wider usefulness.⁶

Tallents thus recommended, as early as October 1938, that the needs of other departments for a systematic broadcast monitoring service be ascertained.⁷ The Monitoring Service and the MoI thus began their wartime work based on the assumption that they would need to fulfil the requirements of a number of

³ Note on MoI Collection Division, by John Beresford, 21 Apr. 1939, TNA INF 1/329; Letter Tallents to Beresford, 1 Nov. 1938, TNA INF 1/329; Draft letter Beresford to Tallents, 2 Jan. 1938, TNA INF 1/2.

⁴ Progress Report of Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) Sub-Committee, by Tallents, 31 Jan. 1938, TNA INF 1/1; Note on MoI Collection Division, by Beresford, 21 Apr. 1939, TNA INF 1/329.

⁵ Letter Beresford to Tallents, 23 Sep. 1938, TNA INF 1/329.

⁶ Report of Sub-Committee for planning MoI, by Tallents, 31 Jan. 1938, TNA INF 1/1.

⁷ Report of Sub-Committee for planning MoI, by Tallents, 31 Oct. 1938, TNA CAB 102/375/1.

different consumers, and that their work may well have applications beyond those originally anticipated.

Propaganda and Political Warfare

The Government's official policy of Appeasement, although conducted alongside military preparations, was detrimental for wartime propaganda planning during the mid to late 1930s.⁸ The budget allotted to propaganda was repeatedly slashed, and disputes between departments and agencies, over control of future policy, were left unresolved. This failure to resolve disputes left responsibility for propaganda divided between different agencies at the outbreak of war. These agencies' relationship altered further as the war progressed. This section will thus clarify the position and individual responsibilities of each of these organisations, before proceeding to state how they made use of BBCM reports for the purpose of conducting Britain's information war.

i. The Ministry of Information

The Ministry of Information was initially assigned future responsibility for British overseas propaganda and censorship by the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) in 1935. The Foreign Office opposed the move to establish a new ministry from the beginning, believing overseas propaganda to fall under their rightful responsibilities. Reginald (Rex) Leeper, the head of the Foreign Office News Department, continued to push for Foreign Office control over propaganda, both through his initial appointment, as head of the sub-committee tasked with preparing the initial plans for the MoI, and after 1936, in opposition to his replacement Sir Stephen Tallents.⁹ Following the Munich agreement on 30 September 1938, Tallents' extensive plans for propaganda were regarded as threatening, not only by the Foreign Office but also now by the previously

⁸ For a recent review of literature on the subject of Appeasement see: Daniel Hucker, 'The Unending Debate: Appeasement, Chamberlain and the Origins of the Second World War', *Intelligence and National Security* 23:4 (2008), pp.536-551; Daniel Hucker, *Public Opinion and the End of Appeasement in Britain and France* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011), pp.2-8.

⁹ C. Robert Cole, 'The Conflict Within: Sir Stephen Tallents and Planning Propaganda Overseas Before the Second World War', *Albion* 14:1 (1982), p.50.

supportive CID. Tallents was forced from office by the end of the year and officially dismissed on 2 January 1939. This resulted in the MoI being unprepared at the outbreak of war.¹⁰ The future Ministry had also lost a number of its originally anticipated functions by September 1939. Most notably, responsibility for conducting publicity in enemy countries had passed to a new organisation known as Department EH.¹¹ The idea of one central department responsible for the formulation of all news and propaganda had thus been defeated.

Nevertheless, when war broke out in September 1939, the MoI still undertook the task of preparing a fortnightly 'Survey of German Propaganda' for the War Cabinet. The reports' chief sources were listed in order, as monitored broadcasts from German stations, communications intercepted by postal and telegraph censor, summaries of the press in foreign capitals, information received by a German Socialist movement hostile to the Nazis, and the weekly summary of the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office.¹² The report, as the title suggested, was more of a survey than an analysis. It summarised the main trend of German propaganda over the previous fortnight and made an assessment as to its potential aim. The survey for the first fortnight of the war, for instance, concluded that propaganda had been unquestionably anti-British, whereas France had escaped with occasional pity. Statements that France had wanted to accept Mussolini's final offer of mediation were interpreted as attempts to split the Franco-British alliance. Several other important trends were then noted, including evidence of acute sensitiveness to American reactions, as betrayed by the tone of their utterances.¹³

Further summaries sought to make note of any changes that had taken place in propaganda strategy since the previous fortnight. The report for the second fortnight of the war thus stated that, although the main offensive efforts were still directed against Britain, there had been a change of tactics. In particular, attacks had been made against the morale of the working class, the cohesion of the

¹⁰ Cole, 'Conflict Within', pp.62-70.

¹¹ Ian McLaine, *Ministry of Morale* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979), p.3.

¹² Survey of German Propaganda, 1-15 Oct. 1939, TNA CAB 68/2/25.

¹³ Survey of German Propaganda, first fortnight of the war, TNA CAB 1/17.

Commonwealth, the fighting spirit of the people and the endurance of the civil population. The reports also looked for any indication of a new military or political development. The second report stated that German transmissions had included a threat, not made in very firm language that the Allies may soon have to fight Russia. The report writers noted that this threat had not been repeated from Russia itself. Finally the report sought to compare German propaganda with Britain's own, noting that German propaganda had been more effective than Britain's in Denmark, Norway and Brazil.¹⁴

The Ministry also produced a number of separate propaganda surveys that used BBC monitored reports of overseas broadcasting as a source to assess the effectiveness of Britain's own overseas broadcasts. These included a weekly report on propaganda, 'Propaganda: An Appreciation of Action Taken and Its Effect', first issued on 21 September 1939, and also a fortnightly report, entitled 'Propaganda in Enemy Countries'.¹⁵ An issue of this latter document, from October 1939, illustrates the type of conclusions that the Ministry drew from a study of monitored broadcasting:

[T]he German wireless for their own home public does from time to time take up points made by the BBC. It would scarcely be likely to do so, unless the German propagandist knew that the statements of the BBC were being heard. It would indeed seem that there are numbers of Germans who, whether through curiosity or dissatisfaction with their own news sources, take the risk of tuning in.¹⁶

At the start of the war, the MoI further produced a daily one-page summary of principal points from overseas broadcasting for the War Cabinet. This duty was taken over by the BBC Monitoring Service itself on 1 January 1940.¹⁷ The surveys, which assessed the effectiveness of British propaganda, continued beyond 1939. The main fortnightly survey for the War Cabinet, however, was soon taken over by the Department for Publicity in Enemy Countries, commonly known as Department EH.

¹⁴ Survey of German Propaganda, 15-30 Sep. 1939, TNA CAB 68/1/34.

¹⁵ 'Propaganda: An Appreciation of Action Taken and Its Effect', first weekly report, 21 Sep. 1939, TNA CAB 68/2/25.

¹⁶ 'Propaganda in Enemy Countries', 25 Sep. – 8 Oct. 1939, TNA CAB 68/1/39.

¹⁷ Olive Renier & Vladimir Rubinstein, *Assigned to Listen: the Evesham experience, 1939-43* (London: BBC External Services, 1986), p.41.

ii. Department EH, PID and SO1

In September 1938, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain requested Arthur Campbell Stuart, a former member of Lord Northcliffe's 1918 propaganda ministry, to establish a similar, although much larger department, for the conduct of 'propaganda in enemy countries' in any future war.¹⁸ The new department was originally established at Electra House, a building on the Victoria Embankment, which housed the headquarters of Cable and Wireless. Due to its location the department became commonly known as Department EH until it relocated in the war to Woburn Abbey, an estate about thirty miles from London, from which time it was also referred to as Country Headquarters, or CHQ. Originally funded by the Foreign Office, it was brought temporarily under the direction of the Minister of Information, Lord Macmillan, before being passed back to the Foreign Office in October 1939. In mid-June 1940 it was passed back to the MoI, only to be taken over a month later on 16 July by the newly established Special Operations Executive (SOE). The section at Woburn was run, following the departure of Campbell-Stuart, as Section SO1 of SOE by Rex Leeper, now under the purview of the Minister of Economic Warfare, Hugh Dalton.¹⁹

Another body, the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office (PID) was originally a quite separate department that produced regional weekly intelligence summaries and reports on any question referred to it by the political departments of the Foreign Office. In order to compile their reports the section used various sources, including press cuttings supplied by Chatham House, reports from British Missions abroad, and copies of the BBC Daily Digest. Its distinctive feature was that it summarised news from a political standpoint.²⁰ However, when PID was also based for a time on the Woburn estate, before it

¹⁸ Charles Cruickshank, *The Fourth Arm: Psychological Warfare 1938-1945* (London: Davis-Poynter, 1977), p.16.

¹⁹ David Garnett, *The Secret History of PWE: The Political Warfare Executive 1939-1945* (London: St Ermin's Press, 2002), pp.x-xi; 36.

²⁰ Note on proposed Political Intelligence Department (PID), by Reginald Leeper, 23 Feb. 1939, TNA INF 1/718. PID was also included in the distribution list on the front covers of the first issues of the BBC Daily Digest, IWM: BBC MSD 1.

moved to London in August 1940, and both departments were under the control of the Foreign Office, its work often overlapped with that of Department EH. PID thus became involved, not only with information and intelligence functions, but also with the production of propaganda. In October 1939 Department EH agreed to supply PID with any monitoring that they needed, and also allowed them access to the files of their intelligence department.²¹

During the peacetime preparation for Department EH, much consideration was given to the composition and function of a planning committee, which would be responsible for the day-to-day conduct of propaganda to Germany. The committee was to be entrusted with, 'the creative direction and executive control of the organisation'. Once wartime mobilisation took place, the Committee was duly constituted at CHQ as the Joint Planning and Broadcasting Committee. As well as members of Department EH, the committee included strong BBC representation, and also, through PID representatives, contained officials from the Foreign Office. The committee met each morning to formulate policy, approve material prepared within the BBC and produce ideas for leaflets and broadcasts.²²

The committee's work relied on BBC Monitoring. On 26 December 1939, for instance, one member of the committee observed that the Germans were dropping the use of the *Horst Wessel Lied*, and requested the BBC representative to check this by the Monitoring Service. If it proved to be the case, it was stated that it was doubtless on account of the anti-Communist nature of the song.²³ The question of a new German propaganda line that strove to present Germany as a socialist state had been a matter of concern to the committee for a while. In December 1939, they arranged for a speaker, Lord Snell, to broadcast on the German 'New Socialism'.²⁴

²¹ Meeting of the Joint meeting of the Planning and Broadcasting Committees (JPBC), 10 Oct. 1939, TNA FO 898/7.

²² The Joint Meeting of the Planning and Broadcasting Committee (JPBC) should not be confused with the JBC (Joint Broadcasting Committee). The JBC was established in 1936, by Hilda Matheson, to produce recordings for broadcast abroad. It is the subject of speculation regarding communist infiltration in W.J. West, *Truth Betrayed* (London: Duckworth, 1987), pp.114-119.

²³ JPBC, 26 Dec. 1939, TNA FO 898/7.

²⁴ JPBC, 30 Nov. 1939 & JPBC, 11 Dec. 1939, TNA FO 898/7.

The committee also made efforts to ensure that BBCM reports were fully exploited for broadcasting purposes. At a meeting on 30 October, a BBC representative assured the committee that BBC Monitoring staff kept in close touch with the News staff. They also stated they would make a point of reminding Monitoring staff to keep a close watch for items likely to be of use for the BBC's German News bulletins.²⁵ On 6 November, the BBC representative clarified that the Monitoring Service were prepared to cooperate with the News section, and in future would send them any news of likely interest.²⁶ Later that month, the question of liaison between the Monitoring Service and the BBC foreign language news services was raised again. The BBC representative indicated that there was still a service that could be performed by members of the intelligence department of EH by reporting points of interest directly to the BBC.²⁷

iii. Political Warfare Executive

The establishment of SOE in July 1940 failed to stop inter-departmental competition over control of overseas propaganda.²⁸ A ministerial committee composed of representatives of all three ministries involved in propaganda and psychological warfare was called in May 1941. This became a tripartite standing ministerial committee to coordinate and direct propaganda to enemy and enemy-occupied territory. Although officially headed by Anthony Eden (the Foreign Secretary), Brendan Bracken (Minister of Information) and Hugh Dalton (Minister of Economic Warfare), much of the day-to-day work of the committee was taken over from August 1941, by three appointed senior officials.²⁹ The formation of the new Political Warfare Executive, under the directorship of the committee, was officially announced on 11 September 1941.³⁰ Its headquarters were based at Woburn Abbey, and it also had London Offices at the BBC's Bush

²⁵ JPBC, 30 Oct. 1939, TNA FO 898/7.

²⁶ JPBC, 6 Nov. 1939, TNA FO 898/7.

²⁷ JPBC, 30 Nov. 1939, TNA FO 898/7.

²⁸ Phillip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the present Day* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p.222.

²⁹ PWE Ministerial Correspondence and Decisions, August 1941, TNA FO 898/11.

³⁰ Garnett, p.xiii.

House. PWE dealt with both white (open) and black (secret) propaganda, and with both printed and broadcast matter.³¹

Following the establishment of PWE, the meeting of the German section at Woburn took over the position previously occupied by the Joint Meeting of the Planning and Broadcasting Committee. The unit also utilised BBCM material in much the same way. The day's BBC Digest and Monitoring Report were consulted at the beginning of every meeting in order to gain an understanding of the recent output of German-controlled stations. From this information and consultation with PWE's own research section, the unit prepared a weekly directive for the BBC, in consultation with the BBC itself, and also composed broadcasts and leaflets for distribution, using BBCM reports and other sources.³²

iv. Prisoner of War Index

On the other side of the propaganda war, the BBC also monitored broadcasts regarding British Prisoners of War on behalf of the MoI. From mid-1940 German broadcasts directed towards Britain regularly contained lists of names and messages from British POWs in Germany. This was designed to attract listeners for the German broadcasts, drawn from anxious relatives and friends of military personnel. The BBC Monitoring Service was tasked with keeping an indexed record of all names and messages broadcast, so that the next of kin could be notified immediately. This was an undoubted public service to the British population. There was also a sense, however, that if the public could be assured that all POW messages were being centrally recorded then it would stop them from listening to potentially morale damaging transmissions. With this intention in mind the Air Ministry issued the following statement to the press in August 1940:

The relatives of officers and men can be assured, that no such announcements will be missed, and that there is nothing to be gained by

³¹ Confusingly PWE was sometimes referred to by the cover name of the Political Intelligence Department or PID, but despite having some of the same staff, was a quite different department.

³² 'Organisation of the German Unit', n.d. (c. March 1941), TNA FO 371/126531.

individual listening to German broadcasts by those anxious for news of personnel missing or captured.³³

MoI files, held at The National Archives, contain large numbers of, at times, emotional letters from relatives of military personnel serving abroad. On one occasion, for instance, the Ministry replied to a man, who had asked for confirmation that a particular individual had been listed in a POW broadcast, that although the individual's name had been mentioned, it had actually been in a list of RAF men killed in action.³⁴ The Ministry was anxious to state, in their replies to the public, that they were unable to accept these broadcast reports as final, and the details regarding a prisoner's camp and location could only be verified once the name and particulars had been formally transmitted through the International Red Cross in Geneva.³⁵ Problems were however caused by poor reception conditions and the difficulties of accurately recording and spelling names phonetically. In August 1941, the Service was able to reply that a Sapper Dick Baleby of Doncaster had been mentioned in a POW broadcast, even though the name was spelt slightly differently. As his rank and hometown were correctly broadcast, they could only assume that Sapper Dick Beiley and Dick Baleby was the same man.³⁶ In September 1941 Vatican Radio also began to broadcast messages from British POWs, necessitating the hire of another employee by BBC Monitoring, to transcribe the new messages.³⁷

Strategic and Military Intelligence

As well as using BBCM reports as a direct source to oversee and formulate propaganda strategy, Department EH and its successor departments, also used it to formulate media analyses for the benefit of other government departments. At a meeting of the Joint Planning and Broadcasting Committee in November 1939, Leeper drew the attention of the committee to the fortnightly intelligence summaries prepared for the War Cabinet by the MoI. Leeper felt that Department EH was the proper department to supply such a document, given its

³³ Extract from *The Times*, 22 Aug. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/405/1.

³⁴ Letter Overseas General Branch to T.I. Jackson, 24 Aug. 1941, TNA INF 1/270.

³⁵ Letter Overseas General Branch to Miss I. Rollett, 19 Aug. 1942, TNA INF 1/270.

³⁶ Letter Overseas General Branch to Rollett, 19 Aug. 1941, TNA INF 1/270.

³⁷ Memo MSeX. to DMS, 4 Sep. 1941, BBC:WAC R13/169/5.

responsibility for enemy publicity. The Committee agreed and decided that if Department EH was given responsibility for supplying the War Cabinet survey, then it should also contain extracts from their secret reports and be treated as highly confidential. Department EH were duly requested to prepare the document, and on 19 November a draft of the first 'Fortnightly Survey of German Propaganda' was shown to the Committee.³⁸

The department soon switched to producing a fortnightly 'Analysis of German Propaganda', based on quantitative analysis of various sources, including BBCM monitored broadcasts. It also produced an 'Analysis of Italian Propaganda' and an 'Analysis of Radio Propaganda from Vichy' in 1940, and an 'Analysis of French Radio Propaganda' in 1941. These documents used the method of quantitative analysis and followed the same format as the German Propaganda Analyses. These analyses, prepared by Department EH, sought not only to describe propaganda from Germany, Italy or Vichy France, but also to discern the strategic intention that lay behind Axis propaganda. The documents divided propaganda into a number of themes, designed to provide bases for comparison, and included percentage figures showing the comparative importance of each theme, in relation to total propaganda output. Percentage figures were provided for the comparative importance of each theme, in propaganda directed towards: (1) the German home population, (2) Great Britain, (3) France, and (4) neutral countries. In brackets after each figure, the corresponding percentage for the previous fortnight was also provided. These figures were collected together in a table at the end of each Analysis for reference.³⁹

The official use of these documents was indicated in March 1940 when the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) sub-committee discussed a conclusion of the Chiefs of Staff. The note sought to alert the sub-committee to the necessity of keeping a constant watch on propaganda, 'with a view to obtaining possible

³⁸ JPBC, 19 Nov. 1939, TNA FO 898/7; 'Publicity in Enemy Countries', 1 Jan. 1940, TNA CAB 68/4/2; 'Fortnightly Survey of German Propaganda', 1-14 Nov. 1939, TNA CAB 68/3/17.

³⁹ There are copies of the 'Analysis of Italian Propaganda', for 1-16 July 1940; 'Analysis of Radio Propaganda from Vichy', for 15-23 Jan. 1940 and 24 Jan.-1 Feb. 1940, and 'Analysis of French Radio Propaganda', for 1-9 Feb. 1941 to 21-28 June 1941, all in TNA FO 898/30.

indications of German intentions.’⁴⁰ It was stated that the Central Department of the Foreign Office received and carefully considered the fortnightly analysis of German propaganda prepared by Department EH, and the daily and weekly reports of broadcasts prepared by the BBC. The Foreign Office, it was stated, took note of any apparent change in German propaganda policy reported within these documents. Concerns were expressed, however, that although such changes might still provide valuable indications, they could no longer be relied on to provide as definite a guide of German intentions as had been the case before the war.⁴¹ The reference to the previously clear relationship between propaganda and action may have been an allusion to a number of analyses conducted along these lines by the Royal Institute of International Affairs prior to the outbreak of war. It was more likely, however, a general observation. In their study of German radio propaganda, Ernst Kris and Hans Speier stated that, prior to the outbreak of war, the relationship between preparation and action had become so inevitable that campaigns within Germany were taken by the world as signals for Hitler’s intentions.⁴²

To investigate the misgivings expressed at the JIC as to whether German propaganda could serve as a guide to German intentions, Department EH’s Analysis of Propaganda for the first fortnight of May 1940 compared the propaganda strategy employed by Germany prior to the invasion of Holland and Belgium with that used for the period preceding the invasion of Scandinavia. Prior to the invasion of the Low Countries, there had been a great volume of propaganda asserting that the Allies were about to extend the war to Southeast Europe, whilst a threat to the Low Countries had only appeared very late, on 8 May, and even then had been given little prominence. In the case of Scandinavia, however, the bulk of propaganda had indicated the direction finally taken. This seemed to suggest that it was not possible to draw a simple relationship between propaganda strategy and intended action.⁴³

⁴⁰ Minutes of Meeting of the Sub-Committee of the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (JIC Sub-Committee), 5 Mar. 1940, TNA CAB 81/87.

⁴¹ JIC Sub-Committee, 5 Mar. 1940, TNA CAB 81/87.

⁴² Ernst Kris & Hans Speier, *German Radio Propaganda: Report on Home Broadcasts during the War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1944), p.290. For an account of the pre-war RIIA experiment refer to pp.76-78.

⁴³ Analysis of German Propaganda, 1-16 May 1940, TNA FO 898/30.

The analysts at Department EH, however, were eager to draw comparisons between the two propaganda campaigns. The May Propaganda Analysis concluded that the sensational ‘discovery’ of a British attempt at sabotage on the Danube immediately before the Scandinavian invasion suggested that: ‘such a propaganda feint generally precedes every German surprise move’. Moreover, they declared that the general theme of Allied unscrupulousness had shown a marked rise during the period preceding the invasion of Holland and Belgium, and an equally marked decline subsequently. A similar development had been noticed during the periods before and after the invasion of Denmark and Norway.⁴⁴

In July 1940, the JIC sub-committee again discussed how the Germans linked up propaganda with their plans. Partially reflecting the findings of the May Department EH analysis, the Committee concluded that:

It appeared that any military operations undertaken by Germany were always accompanied by propaganda designed to facilitate the operation by undermining the resistance of the populace to be attacked and so to make easier the execution of their plans. It was not, however, usually possible to deduce from German propaganda the objects of their plans.⁴⁵

Later that month, on 17 July 1940, Department EH issued a document entitled ‘Tendencies of German Propaganda as an Indication of Future Action’, which again considered whether it was possible to deduce the future action contemplated by the Axis powers from a study of their propaganda. The report, after reviewing the German propaganda strategy surrounding the invasions of Norway, Holland and Belgium, continued to make an assessment as to whether threats of a German invasion of Britain through Eire had any foundation. After tracking these indications of an invasion through Eire, as reported by BBC Monitoring, Department EH stated that it was not possible to make any reasonable deduction from Axis propaganda as to German intentions regarding an invasion of Ireland:

⁴⁴ Analysis of German Propaganda, 1-16 May 1940, TNA FO 898/30.

⁴⁵ JIC Sub-Committee, 6 July 1940, TNA CAB 81/87.

While it is true that on occasions German propaganda has accused this country of contemplating action which she herself has subsequently taken, this procedure was not followed in the case of S.E. Europe.

The report concluded, in agreement with the JIC, that although there could be little doubt that the fundamental aim of German propaganda was to prepare the way for subsequent military action, the Germans appeared to alter the methods employed to achieve this aim in order to affect surprise.⁴⁶

The JIC also discussed whether it would be advisable to replicate the German method of using propaganda to support a specific military strategy. Concern was expressed at the meeting as to the security aspect of this strategy; that the Germans might always expect some action to follow when propaganda was put forward. These concerns were countered, however, with the view, suggested by the results of the recent Department EH analyses, that the German's constantly altered their propaganda strategy, and Britain could do the same. The JIC thus concluded by recommending that the Chiefs of Staff should be given more power to utilise propaganda for the furtherance of their plans.⁴⁷

Despite the unpromising start, the department working at Woburn Abbey took forward their analytical work of attempting to uncover the strategic intentions believed to lay behind Axis propaganda, throughout the administrative changes that saw them absorbed first into MEW, and then into the newly formed PWE. From late 1940 until February 1942, the unit published their findings in a dedicated series of weekly documents entitled 'Axis Propaganda and Strategic Intentions of the Axis'. This document assessed the material according to a number of perceived future strategic possibilities. The first matter considered every week was the possibility of a future invasion of Great Britain. The reports summarised what conclusions could be drawn from the Axis propaganda output that week, and made comparisons to the previous report, to state, in this instance, whether invasion was more or less likely than the week before, or whether there had been a change in the anticipated location of an Axis landing in Britain. The

⁴⁶ Lt. Colonel Sinclair to Colonel Brooks, 17 July 1940, TNA FO 898/30.

⁴⁷ JIC Sub-Committee, 17 July 1940, TNA CAB 81/87.

question of an invasion through Eire was considered as a separate possibility, addressed second each week. Other matters considered weekly for this period were the future attitude of Spain and Portugal to the war, along with the question of Gibraltar, and also the intentions of various other strategically important nations: Italy, Russia, Turkey, Greece, the Near and Middle East, and French North Africa.⁴⁸ These reports did not, however, use quantitative analysis, as the section's analyses of German, French and Italian propaganda had.

BBCM reports were not only useful to Britain's strategists due to the fact they were used as a major source in MoI and Department EH, SO1 and PWE analyses. Many British government agencies, including the Service departments and the War Cabinet, also received BBCM material directly and used it as a source for making their own decisions and judgements.

The Information section of the Naval Intelligence Department of the Admiralty, for instance, extracted references to naval matters from the BBC Daily Digests and received Flashes sent directly from BBC Monitoring. They then forwarded the reports to relevant sections of the Admiralty. Different types of reports were sent to different sections. Reports sent to O.I.C. (Operational Intelligence Centre) were of a short tactical nature and provided information of immediate military value, such as two items forwarded to them on 30 November 1939:

Ferrol Reports heavy gales and presence of floating mines off the Aviles coast.

Mine Danger: A great number of floating mines reported. It has been brought to the notice of the Norwegian Admiralty and later confirmed that a minefield shaped as a circle has been discovered N.E. of Longstone lighthouse on the east coast of England. The centre of this dangerous field is situated at 55.50 N. 1.20W radius about 2 n. miles.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ 'Axis Propaganda and Strategic Intentions of the Axis', 28 Dec. 1940–8 Jan. 1941, TNA FO 898/30.

⁴⁹ Memo from Information Section to O.I.C. re. BBC Digest 135, part II, 30 Nov. 1939. References to broadcasts Norway: in Norwegian: 07.00 GMT 29 Nov. 1939 and Madrid (Spain): in Spanish for Spain: 22.00 GMT 29 Nov. 1939. TNA ADM 199/979.

In contrast, reports of a more strategic or propaganda nature were generally forwarded to M Branch, such as a report on naval matters included in the BBC Monitoring Service Daily Digest for 24 November 1939:

Possibly the most significant feature in these transmissions is the apparent contradiction in the treatment of the British proposal to blockage German exports... On the one hand, there are repeated denials of the presence of German mines in British channels, while on the other, there are frequent references to the military justification under international law, for mine-laying in the neighbourhood of enemy harbours. Both these lines occur in one and the same talk by Zeesen in English for the Far East at 14.15...⁵⁰

There is also evidence that the Admiralty directly contacted the BBC to request their assistance. On 18 January 1940, a request from the Director of Naval Intelligence was forwarded to the BBC Monitoring Research Section. The request concerned a report of a broadcast talk from Frankfurt in French on 15 January. The Director was unable to understand why it had contained an indirect admission that Germany had lost approximately 35 submarines, when up until then both German home and external propaganda had minimised losses. There is unfortunately no remaining record of the response of the BBC Monitoring Service Research Section to the request for an explanation.⁵¹

BBCM reports sent to the Admiralty were also included on occasion in the 'Weekly Resume of the Naval, Military & Air Situation', as in the report for 18-25 September 1941:

According to foreign broadcasts the Norwegian ships Richard with 905 tons, and Baray, 424 tons, have been sunk off the coast of Norway. The Norwegian Vord, 681 tons, is also reported to have been attacked...⁵²

On a similar note, the War Cabinet discussed a number of issues first brought to their attention by BBC Monitoring. In March 1940, they discussed the prospect of being able to use reports of broadcasting to assess the scale of damage or

⁵⁰ TNA ADM 199/979.

⁵¹ Letter DO to Kris, 18 Jan. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/407/1.

⁵² Weekly Resume of the Naval, Military & Air Situation, 18-25 Sept. 1941, TNA CAB 66/18/49.

impact caused by bombing.⁵³ In November 1941, the War Cabinet further considered a recent BBCM monitored Russian broadcast, which had referred to the presence of Romanian and Finish forces on the Moscow front. The Cabinet concluded that ‘on the face of it’, the report seemed impossible.⁵⁴ A year later, in November 1942, the Foreign Secretary informed the War Cabinet that the Germans were increasing the tension over the Prisoner of War issue. He read several extracts from statements picked up by the Monitoring Service, in which the Germans had alleged breaches of the Geneva Conventions. Among the instances given was an alleged British air attack on a field hospital in North Africa. Taken as a whole, the Foreign Secretary considered these messages to exhibit the typical action that Germany would take, if it meant to denounce the conventions in the course of the next day or so. The Cabinet took the decision to do nothing about the matter for the time being.⁵⁵ The following month the treatment of POWs was mentioned again, when it was stated that monitoring of the German wireless had shown few recent references to the manacling of prisoners, even though the treatment of prisoners generally had been mentioned fairly often.⁵⁶

Conclusion

This section of the chapter has shown that BBC monitored material was analysed and utilised as a source of material to guide and conduct British propaganda, to provide indications as to Axis intentions and to provide a direct source of military intelligence to the Service departments. It has also, however, shown the somewhat artificial division of this section. It is hard to define the essential nature of the analyses conducted by the MoI, Department EH and its successors, as consisting of particularly propaganda, political or military intelligence. Propaganda or political warfare was itself central to Britain’s wider strategic war effort; a fact reinforced by Churchill’s decision to establish SOE, in 1940, to conduct war by other means than military engagement. Information reported by BBC Monitoring provided the Service departments, as well as Britain’s

⁵³ Conclusions of Meeting of War Cabinet, 20 Mar. 1940, TNA CAB 65/6/18.

⁵⁴ Conclusions of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, 3 Nov. 1941, TNA CAB 65/20/1.

⁵⁵ Conclusions of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, 22 Oct. 1942, TNA CAB 65/28/14.

⁵⁶ Conclusions of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, 2 Nov. 1942, TNA CAB 65/28/14.

strategists, with items of potential military significance. Interpreting such material, however, required an assessment as to the potential purpose that a state-controlled radio station may have had in broadcasting the transmission, and the Service departments were moreover as interested in broadcast monitoring to see how their organisations and its work were being represented, as to gain specific military intelligence.

Section 2: BBC Analysis and Research

The BBC Monitoring Service was created to make reports on international broadcasting for the use of the MoI and other government departments. Its purpose was not to analyse broadcast material but to collect it. Subsequent chapters will explore the boundaries between collection and analysis in relation to the regular work of the Monitoring Service. This section, however, considers the explicitly analytic activities conducted by BBC Monitoring during the war. Firstly it considers the work and analytical framework of the Monitoring Service Research Section, taking account of its place in contemporaneous sociological literature in the field of propaganda analysis. Secondly, this section considers how the BBC's analytic research, based on monitoring, sought to influence British and BBC broadcasting policy and output. It finally examines the role of BBCM in the BBC's attempt to develop a large-scale intelligence organisation of its own.

BBC Monitoring Service Research Section

Following the outbreak of war in 1939 the newly established BBC Monitoring Service was faced with a mass of confusing and contradictory data. It was found impossible to interpret the various themes from this data, either for themselves or their consumers, without a preliminary process of analysis. This led to the establishment of a small Monitoring Service Research Section in October 1939, in cooperation with the BBC Overseas Intelligence Department.⁵⁷ Unlike the MoI or Department EH, which used written and secret sources as well as

⁵⁷ 'The British Broadcasting Corporation Monitoring Service', 6 Dec. 1939, BBC:WAC R34/476.

broadcast reports to prepare their analyses, the BBC used monitored reports of broadcasts as an exclusive source.

Two of the initial members of the unit, Ernst Kris and Mark Abrams (from BBC Overseas Intelligence) played an important role in the development of, what was termed 'propaganda analysis'.⁵⁸ The Section's main task was to prepare a 'Monitoring Service Weekly Analysis', the first of which was published on 19 October 1939. The Weekly Analysis reported how different nations treated current events on the radio, and recorded any new development in broadcast propaganda methods.⁵⁹ The focus of the analysis was on German broadcasting, however the output of other countries' was considered, including Italy and the USSR.⁶⁰ The section also conducted a series of special 'Studies in Broadcast Propaganda', which arose from the same process of analysis as the weekly documents but studied particular aspects of the propaganda war. These Special Studies were often included within the weekly analyses. They focused on particular groups of transmissions, such as 'News bulletins in German from Moscow', or studied a particular theme in broadcasting, such as 'Economics and German radio propaganda'. Some Broadcast Studies were also conducted on more methodological questions, such as, 'German Propaganda Instructions: Method of Reconstruction.'⁶¹ The Weekly Analyses, often including a Special Study, were distributed to the War Cabinet, the Foreign Office and a number of other government departments.⁶²

⁵⁸ Mark Alexander Abrams was a social scientist who had formerly worked at the London Press Exchange, a leading British advertising agency. During the mid to late 1930s, prior to joining the BBC Overseas department, he undertook pioneering work in mass communications, and established and developed elements of sociology, including social and market research and opinion polling. He worked at the BBC until 1941, before leaving to join the psychological warfare board, and then the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF). (Michael Warren, 'Mark Alexander Abrams', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*). Ernst Kris, after leaving the BBC in 1941, moved to the USA to undertake similar research at the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research.

⁵⁹ Memo Wellington (Director Broadcasting Division) to Director-General, 24 Sep. 1940, TNA INF 1/173.

⁶⁰ BBC Monitoring Service Weekly Analysis (BBCM Weekly Analysis), 19 Oct 1939. Chatham House 9/39f.

⁶¹ French broadcasts to Germany (BBCM Weekly Analysis, 6 Dec. 1939); News Bulletins in German from Moscow (20 Dec. 1939); Economics and German Radio Propaganda (17 Jan. 1940); German Propaganda Instructions: Method of Reconstruction (17 May 1940). All in Chatham House 9/39f.

⁶² Memo Wellington (BBC Liaison, MoI) to Director-General, 24 Sep. 1940, TNA INF 1/173.

i. Analytic Framework: Propaganda Analysis

Analysis of BBCM data was partly considered important at the start of the war because published news differed so much from actual events. This led the Research Section to attempt to discover the principles on which propaganda was being conducted. This process involved - like the later analyses conducted by Department EH - the development of a 'certain skill in prediction', or in other terms the anticipating of political and military events from monitored material. A memorandum from 1940 thus claimed that: '[t]he first real analytical work on propaganda was carried out under the auspices of the Monitoring Service.'⁶³

In his major four-part study of the BBC, Asa Briggs stated that the work of the Research Section focused on the 'psychological interpretation of the data.'⁶⁴ This is a good starting point, but the reasoning behind and working practice of the section's work deserves careful consideration, both for the role it played during the war and also for the pioneering approach it took towards media analysis.

In their Weekly Analysis, the members of the Research Section made clear that, although it may appear that their analyses were based on the Monitoring Service Daily Digest, or at any rate the full transcriptions from which those documents were compiled, the 'raw material' of the weekly reports was in fact 'necessarily the broadcast spoken word.'⁶⁵ This, they stated, was because the significance of any item could only be considered if proper appreciation of the medium in which it had been given was taken into account. In order to further clarify the significance of radio as a medium, in which the dynamic between broadcaster and listener was important, the differences between the press (which relied on the printed word) and broadcasting were set out in an introductory note to the Analysis.⁶⁶

⁶³ Memo Wellington to Director-General, 24 Sep. 1940, TNA INF 1/173.

⁶⁴ Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom*, vol. III: *The War of Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p.148.

⁶⁵ BBCM Weekly Analysis, 26 Nov. 1939, Chatham House 9/39f.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

The Research Section thus recognised that in order to uncover the factors that determined broadcast output, they would also have to assess the estimated effect of those broadcasts on the intended listener. The first weekly analysis highlighted the need to consider the listener in regard to German home transmissions:

The structure of this propaganda plan can only be understood if one keeps in mind that there is a tradition of six years of controlling of public opinion, of distortion of facts and of a ruthlessness of mind, which has not been developed in any other country to a similar extent.⁶⁷

In order to proceed with their analytic work, the Research Section further drew working conclusions about the organisation of propaganda within Germany. The first of these, included in a November 1939 Analysis asserted:

Propaganda is Hitler's own realm. It is the one thing in which he is expert, and the structure of German propaganda, not in its details but certainly in its main lines, is devised by him.⁶⁸

It was further considered that a study of Hitler as a propagandist would enable a more intimate understanding of German propaganda. A month later the Analysis raised the issue again. Noting that they had detected an increase in radio monitoring overseas, from the fact that foreign broadcasts contained an increasing number of direct quotes from foreign stations, the authors reiterated the need for ongoing study:

It should be one of our future tasks, therefore to collect as much evidence as possible on the organisation of the individual broadcasting stations, and of their monitoring services. The organisation behind the broadcasts must be studied in order to assess more accurately the value of information which can be gathered from them. How far broadcasts were an expression of the government's point of view is important for all deductive purposes.⁶⁹

The initial assumptions made about control of propaganda in Germany were actually challenged by John Hawgood, of the German section of the Foreign

⁶⁷ BBCM Weekly Analysis, 19 Nov. 1939, Chatham House 9/39f.

⁶⁸ BBCM Weekly Analysis, 13 Nov. 1939, Chatham House 9/39f.

⁶⁹ BBCM Weekly Analysis, 13 Dec. 1939, Chatham House 9/39f.

Research and Press Service, in a letter to John Salt, the Deputy Director of BBC Overseas Intelligence. Salt had requested the organisation's comments on their Monitoring Service Analysis and informed them of the Research Section's intention to prepare a special study on Hitler's propaganda methods.⁷⁰ Hawgood replied that he looked forward to reading the study, but would question the suggestion made in several of the BBC weekly reviews that Hitler initiated propaganda topics. Although noting the disparity may result from differences between radio and press propaganda techniques, he outlined the view of FRPS:

We have formed the impression from the German press that, while he [Hitler] coins slogans, he is very often weeks behind in taking up propaganda lines and rarely initiates them without some preparation by Goebbels.⁷¹

Making assumptions about the organisation of propaganda within Germany was a hazardous affair. Martin Doherty has recently remarked on the absence of close contact between German propagandists and those with knowledge of military strategy, and further concluded that material was often produced on an ad hoc basis.⁷² The BBC Research Unit did show an appreciation of the difficulties in developing a workable analytical framework, as illustrated by Salt's letter to Hawgood in January 1940:

We have had a good deal of discussion here as to how far to carry the process of analysis... At the moment I am afraid the material is proving somewhat intractable, but no doubt things will speed up shortly.⁷³

In early January 1940, Salt corresponded with an anthropologist, Evans-Pritchard, about the analytic framework of the BBC. Salt forwarded this correspondence to Ernst Kris of the Research Section, stating that Evans-Pritchard's comments on their work from a 'sociological viewpoint' were interesting, as they outlined from a theoretical basis, broadly the framework the

⁷⁰ Letter Salt to Hawgood, 24 Jan. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/407/2. Dr. J.A. Hawgood was employed in the section of FRPS covering Germany and Czechoslovakia. His position and salary are listed in Hansard HoC Debates, 21 Nov. 1939, vol. 353 cc1039W.

⁷¹ Letter Hawgood to Salt, 21 Feb. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/407/2.

⁷² M. R. Doherty, *Nazi Wireless Propaganda: Lord Haw-Haw and British Public Opinion in the Second World War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), p.8.

⁷³ Letter Salt to Hawgood, 24 Jan. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/407/2.

Monitoring Service had developed from a practical standpoint. Salt again, however, stated that the work had reached a critical point, in which they were attempting 'to make sense out of a chaos of lies and half-truths.'⁷⁴

The following day, Kris sent Salt his reflections on Evans-Pritchard's comments. He addressed each of nine points originally made by Evans-Pritchard. The first five, he wrote, had already been applied in the BBC's Weekly Analyses and in a recent study of broadcasts from Hamburg. These points included the intention of the propagandist and the relation of propaganda to practical political matters. Kris, however, stated that points six to nine had only previously been touched on from time to time. These points covered the ideology of the propagandist, propaganda and the creation of a new ideology, reinterpretation of propaganda, and the fact that it was only through studying the material that it was possible to discover the main problems in question. Whilst commenting that he fully agreed with the last point, and that, although interesting, the previous two needed further clarification, it was his response to the first of these points that is most interesting. He wrote that the ideology of the propagandist was a point that had been widely discussed in the sociological literature and added that their material would 'certainly in the long run contribute to answering some problems.'⁷⁵ This supported Evans-Pritchard's final point, with which Kris fully agreed, that it was only by studying the material that it was possible to discover the main problems. Here the issue of understanding the ideology of the Nazi regime was clearly tied to the ability to correctly analyse propaganda for other means, such as to discern the propagandist's intention (point 2) and appreciate the reception of the material by recipients or listeners (point 4).⁷⁶

It is from this perspective that it is possible to understand the motivation behind the wider academic attempt to study Nazi propaganda during the wartime period, including a number of full-length studies authored by former members of the

⁷⁴ Letter Salt to Evans-Pritchard, 18 Jan. 1940, BBC: WAC E2/407/1.

⁷⁵ Memo Kris to Salt, 19 Jan. 1940, BBC: WAC E2/407/1.

⁷⁶ Memo Kris to Salt, 19 Jan. 1940, BBC: WAC E2/407/1.

BBC Monitoring Service.⁷⁷ They appear to have been driven not merely by pure academic interest, but by a belief that gaining an understanding of the regime they were fighting could help to defeat them, both militarily, through discerning intention, and politically, by informing Allied propaganda and counter-propaganda.

ii. Propaganda Analysis as Propaganda?

Almost from the beginning of its existence the BBC Research Section sought not only to analyse overseas propaganda but also, perhaps unsurprisingly given that it was prepared in conjunction with BBC Overseas Intelligence, to make suggestions regarding British propaganda policy. In the Weekly Analysis for the ninth week of the war, a section entitled 'Some Suggestions' urged the need for a long-term propaganda plan against Germany based on 'unlimited and unrestricted truth' in their news system, combined with a detailed comparison of everyday life in Britain and Germany. The sections' theory on German propaganda was that it was, to a large extent, counter-propaganda, and it was this method that Britain should seek to expose:

There is one point only where Germany should be attacked. Her propaganda methods, that is to say, the very fact that the German propaganda raises just those accusations against Britain with which it itself expects to be faced - should be discussed with the German listener.⁷⁸

The technique of focusing on the methods of German propaganda, rather than countering individual arguments made in German broadcasts, was attractive to the BBC. For as stated by the MoI, in response to a letter from the Foreign Office containing lists of items from German broadcasts to be refuted by the BBC: 'The BBC are anxious not to allow the news bulletins to degenerate into verbal warfare.'⁷⁹ In February 1940, a BBC Weekly Analysis examined how German broadcasts from Hamburg had begun to replicate the previously

⁷⁷ Derrick Sington and Arthur Weidenfeld, *The Goebbels Experiment: a Study of the Nazi Propaganda Machine* (London: John Murray, 1942); Kris and Speier, *German Radio Propaganda*.

⁷⁸ BBCM Weekly Analysis, 8 Nov. 1939, Chatham House 9/39f.

⁷⁹ BBC Overseas Service: Countering Nazi Propaganda, TNA INF 1/161, in Doherty, p.101.

British method, used in broadcasts by W.A. Sinclair, of discrediting their opponent's propaganda strategy. A German broadcast on 12 February was quoted to illustrate this method: 'Does it not occur to you, you have always been subjected to incessant propaganda...you cannot harm yourself by giving a few minutes to the other point of view.'⁸⁰ Although such a line appeared hypocritical, it was in reality, as noted by the analysts, linked to an attempt to secure a hearing. The BBC Research Section, labelled the approach as that of the 'anti-propaganda propagandists', and quoted a German broadcast, of 12 January, to further demonstrate the strategy:

It seems as if I were talking quite intimately to you, but I know that people, perhaps even the Ministry of Information in London, are listening hard to catch a careless sentence and to publicise a distortion of some statement in the Press tomorrow. What remarks can one make without running into trouble somewhere?⁸¹

The British also mentioned the Monitoring Service in its propaganda, but it was directed instead towards a home audience, and therefore had a slightly different purpose. A programme by Roger Kemp, entitled 'The Ear of Britain', was broadcast on 4 February 1940, and rebroadcast on 31 March 1940 as part one of a series entitled 'War in the Ether'. Press releases for the programme aimed to increase excitement with the idea of revealing the story of a secret service. The programme dealt not only explicitly with the BBC Monitoring Service, but also with German propaganda. It implicitly contrasted an exposure of German propaganda with the BBC, and more broadly British, policy of openness in even sharing with the public the conduct of its most secret work. Kemp was anxious that no secrets should be given away and the programme was subject to rigorous censorship, but the 'openness' of the programme was felt to have been successful and was apparently regarded as the most successful piece of propaganda to date.⁸²

⁸⁰ BBCM Weekly Analysis, 20 Feb. 1940, Chatham House 9/39f.

⁸¹ BBCM Weekly Analysis, 17 Jan. 1940, Chatham House 9/39f.

⁸² 'BBC Monitoring Service: wartime programmes', information supplied by researcher Jeanette Thomas, 11 Mar. 1992, BBC: WAC C106.

Within this context, considerable research was conducted into the question of using propaganda analysis as a method of propaganda. In early 1940, Salt requested Abrams to conduct listener research relating to the Hamburg broadcasts, which had already been the subject of a Research Section study. The listener research consisted of interviews with individuals and aimed to classify how different types of people would react to propaganda. This listener research was conducted, as suggested by Salt, alongside a study by the Monitoring Service Research Section into the method of propaganda analysis employed by the Institute of Propaganda Analysis (IPA) in America. The BBC had by then been receiving copies of everything published by the IPA for several months.⁸³ The object of the combined study was to assess whether the IPA method could be used: 'to educate the public to adopt a rational attitude, or whether the most that one can do is in fact to appeal to the irrational in a different way, i.e. disguised counter-propaganda.'⁸⁴

The IPA was established in October 1937 by Columbia University professor and former WWI reporter, Clyde R. Miller. Miller's work was driven by inter-war fears over the impact of the growing advertising industry, and also by a concern to maintain future American isolationism.⁸⁵ The Institute primarily aimed to educate the American public to recognise, understand and resist propaganda, most famously issuing their seven common devices of propaganda. The Institute's publications secured a wide readership within the United States and encouraged the American public to consider the potential motive behind everything they heard. The IPA viewed the techniques employed by propagandists as appealing to the irrational aspects of man, and propaganda was viewed as a purely negative influence on society.⁸⁶ The academic literature that developed around the theme of propaganda analysis in the United States, during the late 1930s and 1940s, further defined propaganda as consisting of falsehoods or deliberate deception. Consider Arno Jewett's definition of propaganda in 1940:

⁸³ Memo Salt to Miss West, 29 Mar. 1940, BBC:WAC R34/478.

⁸⁴ Memo Salt to Silvey, 22 Feb. 1940, BBC: WAC E2/413.

⁸⁵ Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind*, pp.177; 183; Phillip Taylor, *British Propaganda in the 20th Century: Selling Democracy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp.49-50.

⁸⁶ Garth Jowett & Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (London: Sage Publications, 2006), pp.226-229.

Propaganda...may be defined as the “attempt on the part of a self-interested person or group deliberately to mislead and misinform the public in order to prevent, impede, or forestall an objective consideration of the facts involved in a public issue.”⁸⁷

The resulting BBC Monitoring Service Research Section report on the IPA, published at the end of May 1940, summarised the definition of propaganda analysis by the Institute:

The essence of the device is that the victim of the propaganda attack is shown that behind the attackers statements there lie motives that are obscured by a process of misrepresentation.⁸⁸

The BBC report further noted how one of the IPA’s special studies had ridiculed the idea that the many Englishmen who had recently arrived to lecture in the United States were not propagandists. Ultimately the report concluded that ‘propaganda-phobia’, encouraged by the Institute, was a widespread American phenomenon, which acted as a form of self-protection. The issue for Britain was how they should treat it, or specifically how propaganda analysis could be used as propaganda in order to create disbelief.⁸⁹

The definition of propaganda adopted by the IPA has been implicitly challenged in recent years. As David Welch has argued, the previous preoccupation of defining propaganda in terms of its irrationality has ignored the fact that propaganda is ethically neutral. Propaganda cannot be defined as purely negative for, as Welch contends, ‘in any body politic, propaganda is... an essential part of the whole political process.’⁹⁰ It is interesting, however, to note that the IPA’s assumptions and methods were also challenged during the Second World War. This criticism was encouraged by the Institute’s decision in October 1941 to suspend their operations in anticipation of war. Without denying the value of healthy scepticism, William Garber, writing for *The American Journal*

⁸⁷ Arno Jewett, ‘Detecting and Analysing Propaganda’, *The English Journal* 29:2 (1940), p.105.

⁸⁸ ‘Propaganda Analysis: A Lesson from the United States’, *Studies in Broadcast Propaganda*, 29 Apr. 1940, Chatham House 9/39b.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ David Welch, ‘Introduction’, in David Welch (ed.) *Nazi Propaganda: The Power and the Limitations* (London: Croom Helm, 1983), p.2.

of Sociology in 1942, criticised the IPA method for failing to make any distinction between truth and falsity, or good and evil. Garber supported his criticisms of the Institute's method by citing the IPA Directors' decision to suspend their activities during war: if they felt their work was harmful to national defence, there was evidently something defective in the type of analysis they employed.⁹¹

Even earlier than Garber, however, the BBC Monitoring Service, in their April 1940 report on the IPA, recognised the danger of using the Institute's method of propaganda analysis. They acknowledged both that propaganda was sometimes essential, and also that the failure to take the morality of the propagandist into account meant that the IPA method was flawed, for their purposes at least. The Research Section's investigation concluded with a caution:

The belligerents, however, must, in using propaganda analysis, go no further than discrediting the enemy's propaganda, scepticism must not spread to their own output... Thus the problem of the right balance between the educational appeal and the emotional appeal is the essential problem involved in the use of propaganda analysis as a method of propaganda.⁹²

The BBC study made no mention of the potential value of the IPA method as a technique for actually analysing propaganda or media. In the years following the publication of the report, however, Ernst Kris of the Research Section began to criticise the IPA method on sociological grounds. In 1941 he argued that their method of propaganda analysis promoted 'a cheap scepticism and a pseudo-sophistication which rejected everything prior to analysis'.⁹³ He particularly criticised the IPA method of breaking propaganda into its constituent parts and devices, which caused the analyst to fail to consider the content and meaning of the propaganda under consideration. It went, after all, completely against the approach adopted by the BBC Research Section, as set out in November 1939, which in fact took a form much closer to the approach Garber advocated in his

⁹¹ William Garber, 'Propaganda Analysis – To What Ends?', *The American Journal of Sociology* 48:2 (1942), pp.240-243.

⁹² 'Propaganda Analysis: A Lesson from the United States', *Studies in Broadcast Propaganda*, 29 Apr. 1940, Chatham House 9/39b.

⁹³ Ernst Kris, 'The Danger of Propaganda', *American Image* 2 (1941), p.20.

1942 criticism of the IPA. Kris asserted that the analyst should instead take account of, 'the total social context of the propaganda under investigation, conceiving the whole as a dynamic field of stress and strains wherein the force of propaganda plays its part.'⁹⁴

The BBC Research Section may have been created at the last minute, out of necessity, to make some sense of the broadcasts being monitored by the BBC. Moreover, the unit may have been bewildered, at first, as to the approach they should take to analysing the material. Ernst Kris and the Research Section as a whole, however, came to take a serious academic approach to analysis and contributed to the sociological literature of the period. As a note on the Monitoring Service written in early 1940 declared of the section:

It is, however, staffed by trained research workers, who are not unaware of the possibilities of constructive social research in the field of monitoring, and who feel that, although engaged specifically on war time lines of investigation, it is still possible, to make a contribution to sociology by establishing the validity of broadcast evidence for the... [unintelligible] purposes of peace.⁹⁵

BBC Propaganda Research and Digesting of Monitoring for the BBC

The Monitoring Service also cooperated with BBC Overseas Intelligence in research that aimed to directly improve the BBC's own overseas broadcasting. In April 1940, BBC Overseas Intelligence proposed the establishment of a new research section, which would produce a fortnightly report on German home propaganda. The purpose of the new section was twofold, as stated in an internal memo that month. Firstly it was to obtain indirect reaction to the BBC's broadcasts and secondly it was to provide ammunition for their own counter-propaganda. Two members of the unit were to monitor the principal Deutschlandsender (German home) programmes, in order to record their tone and suggestion, and also to keep a record of the ability of the German citizen to learn about daily events, through study of two German newspapers and the BBC Monitoring Digest. Meanwhile, it would be the duty of the third member of the

⁹⁴ Garber, 'Propaganda Analysis', pp.240-245.

⁹⁵ 'The BBC Monitoring Service', n.d. (c. Feb. 1940), BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

unit, Mark Abrams, to scrutinise the Digest, in order to record the principal themes of German radio, and also to compare these with the BBC's own German output.⁹⁶

In August, BBC Monitoring agreed to help with these investigations of the BBC Intelligence section, for as it was stated, 'monitors at Wood Norton [would] often be able to observe many significant clues which cannot find their way into the Digest.' The Intelligence section wanted the Monitoring Service to assess the style of language used in German broadcasts, for instance whether irony or any special technique of broadcasting was used. They were also interested in whether the language used in German broadcasts indicated anything about their propaganda strategy, or if there were any signs that the military or diplomatic situation had thrown out Germany's long-term propaganda plan. They were, moreover, interested in all concrete evidence of how German broadcasts differentiated their appeal.⁹⁷ The work got underway immediately, and in September, the BBC made plans to expand their propaganda research on what a given listener heard from all radio sources. The expansion was suggested in order to provide a comparative assessment of the value of the BBC's overseas service. This was because the Director of Broadcasting at the BBC felt he was, 'entirely in the dark as to whether [the BBC was] carrying out any propaganda abroad that is worth anything.'⁹⁸

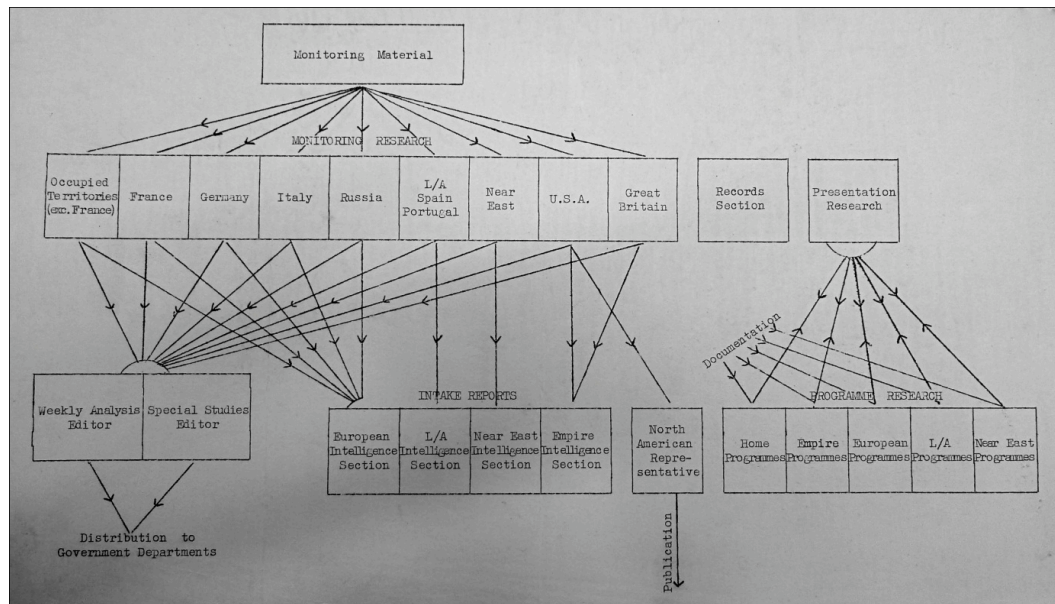
Plans for an extended BBC Propaganda Research Section were prepared later that month and the following diagram was produced to explain its organisation.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Memo Abrams to Salt & Kris, 22.4.40, BBC:WAC R49/150.

⁹⁷ Letter Griffin to Fry, 23.8.40, BBC:WAC E2/411.

⁹⁸ Memo Wellington to D-G, 28 Aug. 1940, TNA INF 1/173.

⁹⁹ 'Propaganda Research', 17 Sep. 1940, TNA INF 1/173.



The section was to encompass the Weekly Analyses and Special Studies in Broadcast Propaganda, already produced by Monitoring Service Research, with a series of Intake Reports, which would examine the BBC's output for each country within the intake of that country seen as a whole.¹⁰⁰ The first Intake Report, published in October 1940, dealt with all material that could be heard that week by the American, Russian and French listener. Later reports also sought to encompass the German, Italian and Spanish listener.¹⁰¹ After receiving the first Intake reports the Director-General of the BBC stated that he had personally liked them, as they had given him a closer grip of what was happening on the air than he had hitherto possessed.¹⁰²

The report, which had advocated the establishment of an expanded Propaganda Research Section, also discussed the need for programme research, including presentation research, which is illustrated pictorially on the right-hand side of the above diagram.¹⁰³ Much of the structure for this ambitious new Research Section, however, was never developed during the war.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Letter Abrams to Wellington, 10 Oct. 1940, TNA INF 1/173.

¹⁰² Memo D-G to Wellington, 20 Oct. 1940, TNA INF 1/173.

¹⁰³ 'Propaganda Research', 17 Sep. 1940, TNA INF 1/173.

The work that was taken forward instead was the production of a Daily Synopsis of material suitable for broadcasting. The German Unit at Woburn Abbey, under SO1 and then PWE, formulated the broad lines for each week's national propaganda policy, from which a team of intelligence officers and writers, headed by Richard Crossman, formulated a detailed weekly directive for the BBC.¹⁰⁴ The directive, which was to be observed by the BBC German news programmes and German features section, usually stipulated certain topics to be covered and the manner in which they should be treated.¹⁰⁵ These directives, however, were still of a broad policy nature, and so the BBC established a Research Unit, under the leadership of Mark Abrams, to prepare a Daily Synopsis of material suitable for broadcast.

In order to prepare their reports, the section used quotes from radio as monitored by the BBC, German newspapers and, for producing more historical pieces, archived material and libraries.¹⁰⁶ The section had its first meeting on 2 May 1941, at which the research board discussed eight principal fields that would guide the Unit in their preparation of points or stories suitable for broadcasting.¹⁰⁷

Items relating to each theme were grouped together in the Synopsis. The document was a synopsis of releases made by the Research Unit, and fuller texts of certain items could be obtained on application, although the points provided in the Synopses were substantial. Material was selected that related to enemy propaganda broadly, not just German, and its level of preparation varied. Some points already had a definite story angle, almost ready for broadcasting. A type of item frequently included was one that illustrated the deceptive methods employed by enemy broadcasting, such as a story on the defence of Malta, designed to fit in with campaign one: that victory in a world war is impossible without naval supremacy. On 26 July 1941, Malta had successfully defeated an

¹⁰⁴ 'Organisation of the German Unit' n.d. (c.6 Mar. 1941), TNA FO 371/126531.

¹⁰⁵ Richard Dove, 'It tickles my Viennese humour': Feature Programmes in the BBC Austrian Service, 1943-1945', in Charmian Brinson & Richard Dove (eds.) *"Stimme der Wahrheit": German-language broadcasting by the BBC* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003), p.60.

¹⁰⁶ Research Unit Daily Synopsis of Releases, 19 June 1941, IWM: BBC RU 263.

¹⁰⁷ Daily Synopsis, 17 June 1941, IWM: BBC RU 263. See Appendix 1 for a list of these established themes.

attack by Italian E-boats with heavy loss to the enemy. The synopsis stated that the incident illustrated the Italian technique of claiming victory on no evidence. Radio Rome (in Italian on 26 July) was quoted in support of this:

It is not yet possible to state the actual damage upon the British Navy, but, knowing the experience and daring courage of the men who were chosen for this mission, one can be sure that at least eight more British units are no longer in a condition to sail.¹⁰⁸

This story was well developed by the Research Unit, but others could just include raw material useful for a programme. For instance, for an item under campaign three: the use of history to show Germany will lose the war, extracts were included from 'The World Crisis 1911 – 1914' by Winston Churchill, and also from Churchill's statement regarding 11 November 1918. The Synopsis provided no explanation, but the extracts themselves made clear the allusions that a broadcast could make to the present, using this material, as the extract from Churchill's 1918 statement demonstrated:

The Unarmed and untrained island nation, who with no defence but its Navy had faced unquestionably the strongest manifestation of military power in human record, had completed its task. Our country had emerged from the ordeal alive and safe, its vast possessions intact, its war effort still waxing, its institutions unshaken, its people and Empire united as never before.¹⁰⁹

From 15 October 1941, an item entitled 'A Year Ago Today' was included under campaign eight in every synopsis until the Unit was disbanded. Campaign eight called for the 'continuous interpretation and vitiation of German propaganda as a machinery for delusion'. The items listed monitored transmissions that had been broadcast a year before, on that date, and sought to both bring out the previously incorrect assessment of the Axis powers, and contrast the situation a year ago with the more favourable present situation. On 17 October 1941, for instance, a quotation from a 1940 broadcast on the German New British Broadcasting Station was included:

¹⁰⁸ Daily Synopsis, 29 July 1941, IWM: BBC RU 263.

¹⁰⁹ Daily Synopsis, 4 Aug. 1941, IWM: BBC RU 263.

Churchill has no intention of attempting to defend London much longer. There are indications that the Government will soon be transferred to provinces, as a first step to the journey across the Atlantic...We may expect them to say shortly that London is not worth defending and then a similar statement will be made about Britain as a whole.¹¹⁰

The final issue of the Synopsis was released on 20 March 1942, when the BBC Research Unit was disbanded and its staff redistributed.¹¹¹

The End of BBC Analysis

The explicitly analytic work of the Monitoring Service was brought to an end during the first half of the war. The Weekly Analyses stopped on 28 May 1940 and the BBC Research Unit was dispersed on 20 March 1942. This has been seen by Asa Briggs as a step to check the attempted development of a large-scale BBC intelligence organisation.¹¹² A range of factors contributed to the decision to halt the continuance and expansion of BBC Research, in the way envisaged in the above diagram.

Concerns were expressed throughout the history of the BBC Research Section regarding the nature and value of the analysis they were conducting. The question of whether the analytical work of the Monitoring Service was amenable to scientific method was discussed very early in the war, and on the whole was found not to meet any of the criteria this method demanded.¹¹³ As mentioned above, Salt of Overseas Intelligence was also unsure how far to develop the process of analysis. The unit did, however, fulfil a valuable function at the beginning of the war, when the government departments in charge of propaganda were still struggling to organise and divide their responsibilities. Indeed the Weekly Analysis attracted a number of letters of praise from consumers outside the BBC. A memo circulated to senior Monitoring Service staff in April 1940 reported on a recent visit to the Admiralty, where the head of the Information Section had expressed his admiration for the Weekly Analysis produced by the

¹¹⁰ Daily Synopsis, 17 Oct. 1941, IWM: BBC RU 263.

¹¹¹ Daily Synopsis, 20 Mar. 1942, IWM: BBC RU 265.

¹¹² Briggs, *War of Words*, p.278.

¹¹³ Special Study on French Broadcasts to Germany, in BBCM Weekly Analysis, 6 Dec. 1939, Chatham House 9/39f.

Monitoring Service, commenting: 'Of such documents as we receive, this is quite the best thing of its kind produced.'¹¹⁴ R.H. Scott of the Far Eastern Bureau of the MoI also wrote a letter praising the BBC Monitoring Weekly Analysis:

I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate those running the BBC Monitoring Service: it is magnificent. We show it to Military Intelligence and to members of the staff here, and one person said it was "the most intelligent production put out by His Majesty's Government."¹¹⁵

The main issue that prevented the BBC from establishing a long-term intelligence agency was therefore not their analytic framework, but their independent status and lack of access to secret information. There was an official reluctance, especially from the Foreign Office, to allow extra-governmental organisations to be involved in intelligence functions. Robert Keyserlingk, in his study of the FRPS, discovered a considerable amount of official opposition to the status of that unit as run by the independent RIIA. This official pressure eventually led to its becoming absorbed into the Foreign Office, so that it could have access to confidential documentation.¹¹⁶ The objections raised to the BBC Research Section continuing with their propaganda analysis work were similar. In January 1941, Department EH strongly resisted the suggestion that the BBC Research Section take over their own analytical work; a move suggested because the BBC was technically in the best position, having access to every monitored transcript, to conduct the statistical analysis of the kind Department EH were interested in at that time. Department EH's objection to the transfer of responsibilities was that EH analyses were: 'produced on a background of confidential information which was not available to propaganda research.'¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Memo Major Wakeham to Baker, Supervisors, Salt & Whitely, 5 Apr. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/407/1.

¹¹⁵ Letter R.H. Scott to Sir John Pratt, 10 Jan 1940, BBC:WAC E2/407/2.

¹¹⁶ Robert H. Keyserlingk, 'Arnold Toynbee's Foreign Research and Press Service, 1939-43 and Its Post-War Plans for South-East Europe', *Journal of Contemporary History* 21:4 (1986), p.548.

¹¹⁷ Note of meeting between Walmsley (EH), DMS, Baker & Whitley, 21 Jan. 1941, BBC:WAC E2/413.

Conclusion

This chapter has firstly provided an indication of the diverse ways in which a wide variety of consumers made use of material supplied by the BBC Monitoring Service during the Second World War. BBCM reporting, like most material gathered from openly available sources, has long been viewed as providing ‘background’ or ‘contextual’ information for intelligence analysts and consumers. This chapter, however, has demonstrated how BBCM material flowed around the British wartime Government and influenced the discussions of those involved in the prosecution of Britain’s information, political and military policy.

This chapter has further demonstrated that the flow and influence of BBCM reports during the war was far from linear. BBC monitored material was summarised and analysed by the MoI, Department EH, and then SO1 and PWE. Their reports were sent to other government departments and agencies, including the War Cabinet, the Foreign Office, the JIC and Service departments, who used them within strategic assessments. The War Cabinet was also, however, in charge of overall policy, including propaganda strategy, and the Service departments were interested in their national and international public image. Department EH, and its successors, were also not only analysers of BBCM reports, they were also end users - they used monitored material and their own analyses, partly based on monitoring, to formulate policy and produce propaganda. This included giving policy directives to the BBC, and encouraging the BBC to use BBC monitored material. The BBC Monitoring Service Research Section and BBC Overseas Intelligence, meanwhile, produced their own analyses based purely, or primarily, on monitored reports. These were important for the Monitoring Service itself, but they also had a wide readership within the Government. The BBC Research Unit further encouraged the use of BBCM reporting in BBC home and overseas broadcasting. In this case, the BBC was then collector, analyser and consumer of BBC Monitoring Service reports. The BBC also provided monitored material straight to government departments and the War Cabinet. Even the recording of British POW names had an

important role in the information war and home security policy, by reducing the listening audience for German broadcasts directed towards Britain.

Finally, this chapter has raised two issues concerning the effect of the administrative positioning of the Monitoring Service within the BBC during the war.

Firstly, there was the objection raised by Department EH, against BBC Monitoring taking over their analytic work. The reason given was that the BBC was not allowed access to the confidential sources, which formed the contextual basis to their work. This lack of access to secret data was a major contributor to the failure of the BBC to establish a large-scale intelligence organisation. It may not, however, have been because a lack of access to secret information actually made the work of the BBC less valuable. Pre-conceived associations of intelligence with secrecy, and the seizure on this fact by departmental rivals, who wished to prevent the development of BBC intelligence, could equally have led to this development. There could even, in contrast, have been benefits to analysing broadcast material without access to secret or confidential knowledge, as they were based purely on what the listener heard. The members of the Monitoring Service Research Section, who had an influential role in sociological research in this field, made it clear from the outset of their work that understanding the dynamic between the broadcaster and listening audience was crucial to interpreting monitored material. The government analyses, based on multiple sources, tended to ignore this audience dynamic. The only available evidence on which to assess the relative value of the documents came from a number of anecdotal reports from its recipients, who referred to the BBC Weekly Analyses as the most valuable product in its field. It is probable, however, that the requirement for these documents was temporary. They had a real value at the beginning of the war, when the Monitoring Service and their consumers were trying to make sense of a rapidly changing political and media environment. They lost some of this value once BBC Monitoring became more established, and their consumers became more familiar with the patterns of international broadcasting.

Secondly, there is a question of whether the positioning of the BBC Monitoring Service made it a potential means for the Government to exercise control over BBC programming. This chapter has demonstrated that government agencies, and the BBC, both talked quite openly about propaganda in their internal documentation. It has also shown that, on the whole, the BBC co-operated with the Government in the prosecution of the information war, especially through the Joint Planning and Broadcasting Committee, and then the German section meeting at PWE. There were exceptions to this relationship, such as the BBC's objection to the countering of individual points made in German broadcasts – ironically the purpose for which BBC Monitoring was first established. These, however, were disagreements over strategy rather than principle. Overall, the BBC Monitoring Service acted as a conduit. They provided material and expertise on which policy decisions were based, and also provided the material and expertise needed to transform these policy directives into programme ideas and content. Government and BBC officials both formulated strategy. The Monitoring Service played a crucial role in the prosecution of the information war, but it did so within a collaborative agreement between the Government and the BBC, which would have existed without the Monitoring Service, and without which, the Monitoring Service would not have occupied the same role.

Chapter 2

Establishment

Whilst working at Manchester radio during the Second World War, a colleague of future English monitor, Lorna Swire, suggested that she become a monitor. Unsure exactly what a monitor was, she looked the term up in a dictionary, only to find an array of seemingly inappropriate meanings that left her none the wiser: a type of lizard, a senior pupil in school assigned to keep order, or a type of ironclad or shallow draught warship.¹ Indeed, it was not until 1976 that the Oxford English Dictionary came to formally recognise the professional definition given to the term ‘monitoring’ in the 1930s.² The BBC adopted the term from the technical field, where it was a device that checked the quality of radiated radio and television signals.³ It was not only the name of monitoring that was first given its professional designation by the BBC, but also to a large extent the profession of monitoring itself. For although there had been small scale international monitoring in the interwar years, it was still such a new enterprise at the outbreak of war, that few in any official capacity had a definite idea about the information it could provide, or had any guidance about how the wartime Service should conduct its work.

This chapter traces the origins of broadcast monitoring, exploring the circumstances and reasons behind the establishment of a separate BBC Monitoring Service in late August 1939. It also examines the basic development of the Service’s organisation and procedures throughout the war. It will consider secret and confidential work undertaken by BBC Monitoring, particularly its adoption of a Y Unit of monitoring. It will further examine the position of secrecy in relation to the Monitoring Service’s regular work. Finally, the impact of the BBC in establishing broadcast monitoring within the United States, ensuring lasting collaboration between the two countries, will be considered, as will the distribution of BBCM material throughout the Allied Coalition.

¹ Interview with Lorna Swire, conducted by Laura Johnson on 5 Aug. 2008.

² Included in supplement to Oxford English Dictionary II, *OED* online.

³ A. White, ‘BBC at War’ n.d. (c.1943), p.27, IWM: Duxford.

International Broadcasting

As a BBC pamphlet stated in regard to their wartime activities, ‘monitoring is the child of broadcasting.’⁴ Rising international tensions during the inter-war years were accompanied by a corresponding rise in the number of radio transmissions, particularly those directed across national borders at foreign populations. The political climate also affected the qualitative nature of these transmissions, especially those emanating from the totalitarian states, which sought primarily, not to inform or entertain, but to control their own citizens and influence the citizens - and sometimes leaders - of foreign nations. There had been such attempts to control and persuade before the advent of radio, most recently by printed means during the First World War. However radio as a medium had some peculiar features that made it of particular concern to those interested in international relations and national security during the inter-war years. Firstly, broadcasting was frequently under greater official control than the press. Secondly, the nature of the medium enabled the potential for continual, unimpeded communication with an unprecedented proportion of the population of foreign nations, and thirdly, as Phillip Taylor has pointed out, transmissions were set within an entertainment context, ensuring a loyal listening audience to the transmissions.⁵

Lenin saw radio thus, as a ‘newspaper without paper...and without boundaries.’⁶ It was appropriate, therefore, that it was the newly instituted Soviet Government, announcing the overthrow of Alexander Kerensky to all revolutionary groups in Europe, who first made dramatic use of the propaganda potential of international broadcasting in October 1917. Radio voice transmission was not yet available and so the message - transmitted by radiotelegraphy in Morse - was not directly heard by the public. The Soviets retained the initiative, however, first instituting shortwave voice transmissions in English in 1925, and in French from 1929. By

⁴ Ramon Silva, ‘BBC Monitoring Service, August 1939- August 1979’ (1979), p.3. Karl Lehmann private papers (KL).

⁵ Phillip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the present Day* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p.222.

⁶ In a letter to the director of the Nizhnegorodsky radio-laboratory in 1920. Brian McNair, *Glasnost, Perestroika and the Soviet Media* (London: Routledge, 1991), p.40.

1930 Soviet broadcasts in English had caused sufficient concern in Britain for the Foreign Office to request the Post Office to institute temporary monitoring.⁷ The 1930s witnessed a rapid expansion in the quantity of international radio transmissions, as Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany sought to extend their influence over foreign territories. As one nation began broadcasting to a region, other countries sought to counter their influence by instituting rival transmissions. By the outbreak of war around twenty-five countries were broadcasting internationally in an increasing variety of languages.⁸

The British came fairly late onto the international scene. The issue of directing transmissions to British overseas colonies had first been proposed at the 1929 Colonial Conference and 1930 Imperial Conference. It was December 1932, however, before an English language BBC Empire service first became operational, with the stated aim of consolidating links within the British Empire.⁹ Five years later, the British Foreign Office invited the BBC to develop a foreign language service for overseas transmission. This move was largely prompted by government concern over the influence of Italian broadcasts in Arabic on Radio Bari to the Middle East, a region traditionally regarded as being within Britain's rightful sphere of influence. The BBC first began transmissions in Arabic to the Middle East on 3 January 1938.¹⁰ The BBC soon added to its foreign language services, with the commencement in March of transmissions in Spanish and Portuguese for Latin America. Services to Europe began in September that year, when translations of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's speech during the Munich crisis was broadcast in German, Italian and French.¹¹

⁷ Garth Jowett & Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (London: Sage Publications, 2006), p.125.

⁸ Bernard Bumpus & Barbara Skelt, *Seventy years of international broadcasting*, Communication and Society, 14 (Paris: UNESCO, 1984), p.31.

⁹ Ibid., p.13.

¹⁰ James Wood, *History of International Broadcasting*, vol. 2, (Institution of Electrical Engineers, 1994), p.39.

¹¹ Alban Webb, *London Calling: BBC External Services, Whitehall and the Cold War, 1944-57* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Queen Mary College, University of London, 2009), pp.4-5.

Monitoring at the BBC

Although the British did not start their own foreign language services until 1938, the potential value of listening to other nation's broadcasting was intermittently recognised throughout the decade. Experimentations in monitoring at the BBC dated back to 1930, when an attempt to report Soviet broadcasting was undertaken. However, in the absence of government financial support, the scheme was soon dropped.¹² The outbreak of the Italo-Abyssinian war in 1935 also prompted the BBC to begin monitoring Italian bulletins in English. The Foreign Office were shown examples of the BBC reports, but gave neither encouragement for the continuance of full-scale monitoring, nor showed any inclination to take over the responsibility. The service was therefore reduced to the transcription of selected news bulletins.¹³

Regular monitoring of foreign language services finally began in late summer 1937, this time by the Foreign Office itself who began covering Italian news broadcasts in Arabic.¹⁴ Following the institution of the BBC's own foreign language service in 1938, this responsibility was transferred to the BBC, who needed to stay informed of what was being broadcast to the region by other nations, in order to determine the content and style of their own transmissions. Monitoring was thus undertaken at this early stage, as an additional duty by the BBC's foreign language broadcasting staff. This was anticipated by the contracts of the first recruits, which included the clause, 'your duties will include listening to, reporting on and transcribing foreign broadcasts.'¹⁵

Booking lists of foreign news bulletins were supplied every month to Tatsfield, the BBC's receiving station, and the London control room. The broadcasts were then intercepted at Tatsfield and passed by landline to the third floor of Broadcasting House. Here David Bowman, with the help of two assistants,

¹² 'BBC Monitoring – A Brief History', n.d., BBC:WAC C1/181/1.

¹³ 'Monitoring of Foreign News Broadcasts', 27 June 1938, BBC: WAC, E2/405/1.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ BBC Radio 4 programme 'Listening to War', by Alvar Lidell, recorded Oct. 1980, British Library Sound Archive (BL:SA) T3631WC1.

managed the monitoring operation.¹⁶ Arrangements were also made so monitors could have direct communication with Tatsfield for the Spanish and Portuguese broadcasts, for which reception proved of the greatest difficulty.¹⁷

Some dissatisfaction was expressed regarding both the quantity and quality of the reports produced by the BBC during this period. A letter to the BBC Deputy Director-General, in mid-1938, requested a more regular service be instigated in order to improve the BBC overseas bulletins. This would allow for specific responses to be given to inaccuracies in foreign broadcasts and more generally provide bulletin writers with a fuller picture of what was happening elsewhere. It was also felt that the quality of monitoring needed improvement, which could only be achieved by having dedicated monitors who possessed a wide knowledge of international affairs and experience of listening to short-wave broadcasting, which tended to be the least distinct signals.¹⁸ The need for dedicated monitoring staff was clear.

The Royal Institute of International Affairs

During the pre-war period the BBC largely monitored to provide news and information for their overseas broadcasts. BBC Monitoring also provided an immediate news source for the Government. There was, however, another aspect to monitoring, stemming from the nature of broadcasting itself. In 1938 The Geneva Research Centre concluded a six-month study into the political influence of growing international radio transmissions, with the statement that: ‘the ether had become a battlefield.’¹⁹ Regarding international radio transmissions as a battle is helpful in illustrating the perceived inverted relationship between broadcasting and security. Ernst Gombrich, a former wartime monitor, has explained how broadcasts contained within them the potential to reconstruct the directive on which they were based. This he described as ‘the Achilles heel of

¹⁶ Olive Renier & Vladimir Rubinstein, *Assigned to Listen: the Evesham experience, 1939-43* (London: BBC External Services, 1986), p.14.

¹⁷ ‘Monitoring of Foreign News Broadcasts’, 27 June 1938, BBC: WAC E2/405/1.

¹⁸ Letter BW to DDG, 26 May 1938, BBC:WAC R34/476.

¹⁹ Thomas Grandin, ‘Brief Account of an investigation of Radio in its Political Aspects and Projection for a Listening Centre’, *Geneva Research Centre*, VIII, 31 Dec. 1938, Chatham House 9/39a.

totalitarianism'. Monitoring, he stated, was 'the secret weapon against it', for a totalitarian country, which had to carry the masses with it by mass indoctrination, could not help but give its thoughts away.²⁰

As demonstrated in the last chapter, both the BBC Monitoring Service Research Section and Department EH, and its successors, conducted analysis of monitored material during the war, in order to reveal the potential political and military intentions of the broadcasting country. The Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA), however, conducted the preparatory work for such analysis, during a six-month experimental study in broadcast monitoring, conducted from May 1939 until the outbreak of war. The idea for the study seems to have originated from a suggestion of Edward Murrow, the European representative of Colombia Broadcasting Station (CBS). The suggestion finally reached Chatham House through Tracy Kittredge of the Rockefeller Centre, the organisation that provided the funding for the project.²¹ The purpose of the unit's work, as stated by the Secretary of the RIIA, Ivison Macadam, was: 'not to impart news or information supplied by the respective broadcasting systems'. It was rather to analyse and compare the news as presented by various countries, to uncover underlying broadcast trends, and, in the case of the totalitarian countries, 'the deliberate campaigns that [were] organised and sustained on [the] grounds of State policy.'²²

The project was placed under the leadership of David Hallett, who had previously worked in an international press agency. He was felt to have both the background knowledge in international affairs, and the skills in editing, which would be required for the task. Both Hallett and his two assistants also had knowledge of French and/or Italian and German. The unit produced a series of analytic reports, based on study of French, German, Italian and British

²⁰ Ernst Gombrich, "'Swansongs' from 1945", *Umění*, XLVI (1998), p.467.

²¹ Extract from Draft Council Minutes, 19 Apr. 1939, Chatham House 9/39a.

²² Letter Secretary, RIIA to John Marshall, Rockefeller Foundation, 11 Aug. 1939, Chatham House 9/39a.

broadcasting. These reports were distributed to institutions in Western Europe and the United States with an interest in international affairs.²³

At the outset of the project, Ivison Macadam had stated the analysis would properly fall into two stages, the first being the collection of the material and the second, the actual analysis.²⁴ Although Hallett found it more difficult than initially anticipated to run these processes as discrete phases, the unit nevertheless spent the first couple of months familiarising themselves with the material, before they began to produce fortnightly reports in mid-June. The reports continued to be published until 25 August 1939 when, in anticipation of the declaration of National Emergency, the experiment was forced to come to an abrupt conclusion.²⁵ Although small in scale and possessing a limited range of objectives, the Chatham House experiment struggled, as the future BBC Monitoring Service would, to cope with the volume of material available. The first analysis stated as much when it declared: 'The large amount of material involved makes the task of selection a difficult one.'²⁶ The following month, Macadam again stated that the main problem experienced by the unit was to 'extract from the enormous amount of available material, the points, many of them seemingly futile, which have a purpose and are significant.'²⁷

The RIIA unit had been in contact with the BBC Overseas section from its outset and the BBC invited Hallett and his team to join the Monitoring Service on the outbreak of war. Thus the expertise and experience of both the BBC and RIIA experiment were combined in late August when the first monitoring contingent travelled to Wood Norton in preparation for war.

The Decision to Establish a Wartime Service

It was not until mid-1938 that MoI planners began to recognise the importance of radio broadcasting as a source of intelligence in any future war - a development

²³ Extract from Draft Council Minutes, 14 Apr. 1939; Extract from Meeting of Finance Committee, 7 June 1939, both Chatham House 9/39a.

²⁴ Letter Macadam to Kittredge, 14 Apr. 1939, Chatham House 9/39a.

²⁵ Letter Hallett to Cleeve, 26 Jan. 1940, Chatham House 9/39a.

²⁶ Experimental Analysis of Broadcasts, 19 July 1939, Chatham House 9/39a.

²⁷ Letter Secretary, RIIA to Marshall, 11 Aug. 1939, Chatham House 9/39a.

concordant with Britain's relatively slow entry into the realm of international broadcasting. At a Ministry planning meeting with press officers of the Service departments on 29 May 1938, it was mentioned that the interception of German wireless communiqués during the First World War had been important for the issuing of counterstatements without delay.²⁸ The idea, however, was not taken forward at this point to suggest the monitoring of telephony broadcasts, and only the need for a press cuttings section was mentioned in official documentation over the following months.²⁹

In late September, John Beresford, the man in charge of planning the MoI's Collection Division, wrote to Sir Stephen Tallents, stating that the War Office's Directorate of Military Intelligence in the last War had followed every effort of German propaganda, and countered it in the same language in which it was written. Beresford stated that German and Italian propaganda should be studied and instantly countered in a similar manner if war was to come again, but probably this time by wireless, due to the need for promptitude. This function, he declared, should be the responsibility of the MoI, and in particular the responsibility of the section of the Ministry's Collection Division that would have contact with the Intelligence Divisions of the Service departments, MEW, and the Foreign Office. He concluded by stating that such work would involve 'a staff of linguists of literary ability, the sort of folk one would find at Universities', and that this important matter should be 'got on with at the earliest possible moment.'³⁰

Beresford wrote to Tallents again the following month, suggesting that effective liaison arrangements should be made with the various means of interception. He stated that it would be a function of the Collection Division to track down enemy propaganda, in whatsoever form, so that immediate counter measures could be taken. He then listed the probable main channels for enemy statements and the appropriate methods for their monitoring and interception. 'Wireless broadcasts, telegraphy and telephony' were listed as the first important channel for the

²⁸ Letter to Beresford, 30 May 1938, TNA INF 1/329.

²⁹ 'Preliminary proposals as to functions and organisation of the Collecting Division', by Beresford, 14 Sep. 1938, TNA INF 1/329.

³⁰ Letter Beresford to Tallents, 23 Sep. 1938, TNA INF 1/329.

interception of enemy statements, but the wireless interception service of the Post Office was mentioned as the first means of interception of such statements, as they already carried out a considerable amount of confidential work of this character, on behalf of the Foreign Office and the Defence Services. The monitoring conducted by the BBC was only mentioned as the fourth possible means of interception of enemy statements at this stage.³¹ Several days later, a MoI planning report linked the issue more directly to the broadcast monitoring already conducted by the BBC:

[I]t might be vital to the Government in those early days to know what an enemy Government was telling both its own people and other countries about the issues at stake...it may be thought necessary to arrange for a combined study of this problem and of the related "monitoring" problem... mentioned in paragraph (78).

The paragraph referred to stated that the BBC, through its station at Tatsfield, had already made arrangements for the monitoring of foreign programmes. In time of war or crisis, the report continued, this service would be of importance to the MoI. It was also suggested that the anticipated needs of other departments should be ascertained with a view to a more systematic monitoring service being organised in case of war.³² Around this time, the BBC began exploring the staff and general arrangements that would be required for special monitoring during any future emergency. J.B. Clark, Director of BBC Overseas services, was anxious to point out, however, that they would not increase the normal monitoring service to any great extent until they knew this extension was definitely required.³³ Following this initial surge of interest in the BBC's activities, the issue of monitoring appears to have been set aside for several months, along with Tallents' wider plans for the shape of the future Ministry, as a new faith in Appeasement predominated.

In contrast, the Munich crisis led officials at the BBC to recognise the necessity of acquiring a wartime reserve base in the country, which would be less

³¹ Letter Beresford to Tallents, 27 Oct. 1938, and accompanying memo 'Enemy Propaganda', by Beresford, 26 Oct. 1938, TNA INF 1/329.

³² Report of CID Standing Sub-Committee to prepare plans for the establishment of MoI, by Tallents, 31 Oct. 1938, TNA CAB 102/375/1.

³³ Memo Clark to LW, 27 Sep. 1938, BBC:WAC E2/411.

susceptible to disruption from the anticipated bombing of London, and also from electronic interference. Their search for suitable premises resulted in the purchase, in April 1939, of Wood Norton Hall near Evesham, the former home of the exiled Duc d'Orleans. Work was undertaken almost immediately to prepare the house as an emergency broadcasting centre and wartime base for the BBC Monitoring Service.³⁴ Bruce Perslow, appointed Engineer in Chief, began the process of installing transmitters and receivers on Tunnel Hill – a hill overlooking the main house – on Easter Monday and also established a small control room in a wooden hut on the hill. The BBC spent an initial £810 on the wooden hut, and on six receivers and aerials. Plans for a series of huts, earmarked for the monitoring operation, were also made, but serious work for the occupation of Wood Norton was held in abeyance until early August, and the huts remained unequipped at the outbreak of war.³⁵

In the absence of Ministry guidance, the BBC also took the initiative in planning the enlarged wartime Monitoring Service. In April 1939, it prepared recommendations for a separate monitoring unit 'independent of other broadcasting activities'. In order to cover German and Italian transmissions, the BBC recommended the unit should consist, as a minimum, of: a director; an assistant; three supervisors; eight German, six Italian, six Spanish, six French and two Arabic monitors; and between 12 and 20 Stenographic staff (at least six of whom should be capable of monitoring in English). They also estimated capital costs at £7000, consisting of ten receivers, recording equipment, building, power supply, wiring and contingencies. The recommendations made clear, however, that: 'questions of expense and recruitment of staff ha[d] naturally to be considered by the Ministry of Information and the other departments concerned.'³⁶

By early June 1939 plans for the future MoI Collection Division were again underway. Allowance was made for a total of four staff to be employed within the Collection Division, as part of a section entitled 'Collation of Enemy

³⁴ 'Staff at Broadcasting House', 28 Nov. 1939, BBC: WAC R13/169/1.

³⁵ W. B. Purslow, 'Reminiscences of W.B. Purslow: Broadcasting House', 1 Sep. 1970; W.B. Purslow, 'Wood Norton and its Activities: A brief account', both BBC: WAC C1/181.

³⁶ BBC Memo, 18 Apr. 1939, BBC:WAC E2/409/1.

Propaganda'. It was noted, however, that this did not replace the staff that would be employed by the BBC.³⁷ The cost of the enlarged monitoring scheme, in the event of war, was to be borne by the BBC, as a legitimate activity under their charter, and funded by the Government via an annual increase to their grant in aid to the Corporation.³⁸

In June 1939, the Deputy Director-General of the BBC, Cecil Graves, suggested to the MoI that a young Foreign Liaison Officer working at the BBC, Richard Marriott, would be a suitable candidate to oversee the Collecting Division's monitoring work.³⁹ Sir (John) Beresford Clark duly informed Marriott of his new wartime role to organise and run a wartime unit, listening to foreign broadcasts for the benefit of the MoI and BBC news departments.⁴⁰ Marriott was to become head of the interception or 'M Unit' at Wood Norton on the outbreak of war, but the actual post of 'Director of the Monitoring Service' was given to Malcolm Frost, then Director of BBC Overseas Intelligence. There is no record that Marriott himself objected to Frost being appointed as head of Monitoring. J. B. Clark, however, in an internal memo to the BBC Director-General, strongly protested against the decision to make Frost Director, with Marriott subordinate to him. Clark particularly expressed his embarrassment at the fact that he had very reluctantly undertaken the task of persuading Marriott to stay on at the BBC in the event of war, forcing his retirement from the TA, only for him now to be made subordinate to Frost.⁴¹ After a reorganisation in June 1940, Marriott was appointed Head of the Monitoring Service, directly responsible to the Director of Overseas Intelligence.⁴²

³⁷ Letter A.P. Waterfield to K. Rowe-Dutton, Treasury, 10 June 1939, TNA INF 1/329.

³⁸ Note of Treasury meeting to discuss accounting arrangements in connection with the Broadcasting vote, 19 Jan. 1940, TNA HO 256/363.

³⁹ Letter Waterfield to Beresford, 14 June 1939, TNA INF 1/329.

⁴⁰ Richard Marriott, 'BBC Monitoring: how it began', The Association of Broadcasting Staff Bulletin, 1960. KL.

⁴¹ Memo Clark to DG, 15 Oct. 1939, BBC: WAC, R13/169/1.

⁴² Memo Director Staff Administration to Head Office Distribution No. 1, 28 June 1940, BBC:WAC R13/169/2.

Recruitment and Staff

After Marriott was given the go ahead from the MoI in June, he commenced his preparations for the future Monitoring Service in earnest, with the assistance of a secretary, Norah Wadsley, and also Oliver Whitley of the BBC Home Intelligence department, who was drafted in as second in command. In July 1939, the MoI Collection Division, made it clear to Marriott that it would be better if those employed for the Monitoring Service be considered BBC, rather than Ministry, staff. Otherwise, it was pointed out, the Ministry would have to be involved at the recruitment stage and the pay and conditions of any employees would have to be brought in line with civil service conditions.⁴³ In consultation with David Bowman, the man in charge of pre-war BBC monitoring, Marriott and his team began recruiting future wartime staff for the Service.⁴⁴

The BBC placed an advertisement in *The Times* calling for applicants conversant in one or more foreign languages. George Weidenfeld, now Lord Weidenfeld, particularly recalls being first alerted to this newspaper advertisement by his then host in Britain, a member of the Plymouth Brethren, with whom he had been staying since leaving his native Austria in 1938.⁴⁵ Invitations to sit qualifying tests for the Monitoring Service were also issued to current BBC staff with knowledge of foreign languages. Throughout July and August hundreds of candidates were called to Broadcasting House, in London, to undertake monitoring tests in one or more of the languages in which the BBC was then issuing broadcasts. Candidates had to listen to both a BBC bulletin recorded in perfect conditions, and another picked up by wireless receiver from a foreign transmitting station in poor conditions. They then had to produce summaries of both bulletins within a suggested time period of an hour.⁴⁶ Successful test applicants were interviewed and if satisfactory placed on standby, to be called up in the event of war.⁴⁷ Many of the monitors initially recruited were multilingual, but all were assigned to a particular language, whether it was the one they were

⁴³ Letter Woodburn to Colonel Stafford (BBC), 24 July 1939, BBC:WAC E2/414.

⁴⁴ Silva, 'BBC Monitoring', p.8, KL; Marriott, 'BBC Monitoring: how it all began', BBC Staff Bulletin (1960). KL.

⁴⁵ Interview with George Weidenfeld, conducted by Laura Johnson on 27 Feb. 2009.

⁴⁶ Sample Monitoring Test, 23 July 1939, BBC:WAC E2/414.

⁴⁷ Silva, 'BBC Monitoring', p.7, KL.

most fluent in or not. Marriott and his team set out to recruit the initially suggested monitoring contingent of eight German, six Italian, six Spanish, six Portuguese, six French and two Arabic monitors.⁴⁸ On 8 August 1939 it was confirmed that the large proportion of these monitors had already been recruited.⁴⁹

Many of the foreign language monitors employed by the BBC were refugees, or technically became refugees whilst in Britain, if they had not left their country with that status. The issue of employing foreign nationals within the Monitoring Service does not seem to have caused much difficulty within Britain, although the BBC did feel it necessary to keep count of the number employed in the Service. In January 1942 it was stated that out of 470 people employed in the Monitoring Service, 379 were British and 91 aliens, who consisted of 75 monitors, 12 typists and four supervisors. 13 British subjects were also described as ex-aliens. In total, Monitoring Service employees were listed as coming from 24 different countries. It was, however, felt necessary to point out that: 'In no cases [were] foreigners deliberately selected to fill Monitoring vacancies in preference to British subjects.'⁵⁰ The question again arose, near the end of the war in May 1945, when Lord Alwyn specifically criticised the employment of German nationals at the BBC, stating that he had 'a profound distrust of German[y] and the German race' and quoting from a former Monitoring Service employee who had supposedly resigned due to the behaviour of Germans employed at BBCM. The Marquess of Reading and Lord Munster replied in support of the BBC. The former reminded Lord Alwyn that the majority of the Germans employed in the Service were Jews, who would be in Dachau or Belsen or Buchenwald if they were not in Britain; and Lord Munster reassured the House that foreign nationals were only employed in the absence of a suitable British candidate and that there were only 66 Germans employed in the Monitoring Service, and only 136 in the whole of the BBC.⁵¹ On a practical level, employment at the BBC Monitoring Service excluded foreign nationals from being interned by the authorities, but as former monitor Ewald Osers has

⁴⁸ Letter AGE0 to DSA, 19 July 1939, BBC:WAC E2/414.

⁴⁹ Memo Marriott to ADOA, 8 Aug. 1939, BBC:WAC E2/414.

⁵⁰ Answers to Parliamentary Questions, 24 Jan. 1942, BBC:WAC R13/169/6.

⁵¹ *The Times*, 3 May 1945.

commented, nationality may have been a factor in certain candidates not being initially selected for employment at BBC Monitoring.⁵²

Many of those who came to work in the Monitoring Service during the Second World War were university educated, whether or not they were foreign nationals. Such was the case for Ewald Osers, a German and Czech monitor, who later became one of the foremost literary translators, as well as a poet in his own right. A student of Chemistry at the University of Prague in 1938, Osers had found his position, as the only Jewish student in a class of largely pro-Nazi Henlein party supporting classmates, increasingly untenable. Following *Kristallnacht*, he made the final decision to leave his native Prague and continue his degree at University College London, where in March 1939 - following the German occupation of Czechoslovakia - he became an official refugee.⁵³ Other early recruits included the art historian, Sir Ernst Gombrich, and Ernst Buschbeck, a prominent gallery curator, who, despite not being Jewish, lived in self-imposed exile in Britain between 1939 and 1946, before returning to his native Austria, where he became Director of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.⁵⁴

Refugees from Central Europe continued to be a rich source of recruits for the Monitoring Service as it expanded during its first year. Stephen Ullmann, a linguistic scholar, came to work at the Monitoring Service in 1940, having left Hungary the previous year.⁵⁵ Martin Esslin (born Martin Pereszlenyi), the future theatre scholar and Head of the BBC's drama division in the 1960s and 1970s, also came to work for a time at the Monitoring Service, having left Vienna following the Anschluss. Esslin, a secular Jew, realised that a theatrical career in increasingly anti-Semitic Austria had become an impossibility, and left first for Brussels, before making the journey to England during the German invasion of the Low Countries, only to be interned on the Isle of Man, before finally being released and employed at BBC Monitoring.⁵⁶ Karl Lehmann, who continued working in the Monitoring Service until the early 1980s, left Germany in 1936,

⁵² Interview with Ewald Osers, conducted by Laura Johnson on 7 Aug. 2008.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Renier & Rubinstein, p.93.

⁵⁵ R.E. Asher, 'Stephen Ullman (1914-1976)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

⁵⁶ John Calder, 'Martin Julius Esslin (1918-2002)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

aged 14, to attend boarding school in Reading, before proceeding to Queen's College, Oxford where he read French and German. With a Jewish father, return to Germany was impossible, and seeing an advertisement for a Dutch monitor in June 1942, he applied for the post, despite knowing no Dutch. The BBC had the sense to test him in German instead and he was placed on standby for when a vacancy arose. He was finally offered a post in November, which he decided to take despite having since secured a position in a school in Tunbridge Wells, for he wanted a job more directly connected to the war effort. By the time he left the Service in 1981, he had been promoted to editor of the entire monitoring output.⁵⁷

Ilse Barea, the Austrian born wife of exiled Spanish republican leader, Arturo Barea - who also came to work in the Monitoring Service - was one of the first Spanish monitors at Evesham. Olive Renier, who worked in the listening room from 1940, before proceeding to establish the Service's index section, described living and working with the Barea's and Ilse's parents at Evesham:

The fate of the Bareas was symbolic of the giant lost causes of our generation - the fate of Spain, the fate of the Jews, the fate of social democracy in Germany, in Italy, in Europe as a whole.⁵⁸

Russian speakers, a rare sight in the early days as Russian was not one of the languages initially recruited for, included the man cited by many as the greatest ever monitor, the broadcaster and writer Anatol Goldberg, who was to become head of the BBC Russian Service during the Cold War. Goldberg, who monitored in German, Spanish and Russian, was one of several remarkable multi-linguists who found themselves at Wood Norton during the war. Born in St Petersburg in 1910, he had emigrated with his family to Germany in 1918, where he attended a French school and studied Chinese and Japanese at the Berlin School of Oriental Studies, before first acting as an interpreter for the British in the early 1930s, when he was sent to Moscow to work on the

⁵⁷ Interview with Karl Lehmann, conducted by Laura Johnson on 13 Oct. 2008; Letter from Karl Lehmann to author, 1 Aug. 2008.

⁵⁸ Olive Renier, *Before the Bonfire* (Shipston-on-Stour: P. Drinkwater, 1984), p.101.

construction of the British Embassy.⁵⁹ Another remarkable multi-lingual Russian monitor, who worked at BBC Monitoring from the very beginning of the war, was Vladimir (Vova) Rubinstein, who has since co-authored a book on his experiences at Wood Norton with fellow monitor Olive Renier. Rubinstein was born in 1916 in Tallinn, Estonia, then part of the Russian Empire, where he experienced the chaos of the Russian Revolution and its aftermath, before moving with his family to Berlin in 1923, where he spent most of his schooling before the establishment of Nazi rule in Germany caused his family, being Jewish, to decide to leave for British Palestine. Vova finally came to England in 1936 to study at the LSE and Peterhouse, Cambridge. He was placed on a War Office central registry of specialists on his graduation, due to his knowledge of languages, and it was through this list that he found himself assigned to the Monitoring Service at the outbreak of war. By that time he was fluent in Russian, German, French, English and Hebrew.⁶⁰ Prince A Belosselsky, first employed to monitor French, was another Russian born employee amongst the initial monitoring contingent at Wood Norton, despite the fact that no Russian-speaking monitors were officially recruited.⁶¹

Other BBCM employees included Gustaaf Renier, husband of Olive, who had known David Hallett before the war, when they had both been students in Ghent. The two had established the London Branch of an agency Trans Radio for the dissemination of currency prices to subscribers, before Hallett became employed managing the RIIA monitoring unit.⁶² Gustaaf, who was eager to be employed directly in the war effort, decided to join Hallett at the BBC Monitoring Service in late August 1939. Historian Isabel de Madariaga, the half Scottish daughter of Spanish writer and diplomat Salvador de Madariaga, also worked for the Monitoring Service at Evesham from 1940 to 1943, as did her husband, whom she met there, Leonard (Bertram) Shapiro. Shapiro, a historian and barrister,

⁵⁹ 'Obituary for Mr Anatol Goldberg', *The Times*, 9 Mar. 1982.

⁶⁰ 'Last Word' on Radio 4, broadcast 5 Dec. 2008; Obituary: Vladimir Rubinstein', *The Telegraph*, 23 Dec. 2008: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/3540388/Vladimir-Rubinstein.html>, 1 June 2011.

⁶¹ List of names of people who will work in Monitoring Unit, attached to Memo FLO to DSA, 22 Aug. 1939, BBC:WAC E2/414.

⁶² Renier, *Before the Bonfire*, p.71.

became a monitoring supervisor in German and Russian at Wood Norton, before moving to the general staff of the War Office in 1943.⁶³

The editorial staff was primarily of British origin, at least at the beginning of the war. Notable editors, employed at the Monitoring Service, included the radio and television broadcaster, Gilbert Harding, and the poet Sir William Empson. Sub-editors were initially paid £480 a year, and the chief sub-editor was paid an extra £120 a year. Many of those recruited to editorial had a journalistic background, with experience of dealing with large volumes of information.⁶⁴

English monitors and typists tended to be women. Marjory Todd had been working on a Ministry of Food Survey in Evesham, and having noticed a number of 'foreign-looking people in the town' discovered that Evesham was the wartime base of the BBC Monitoring Service. Her work on the Survey was due to come to an end and so she wrote to the Service asking for work. After an interview, she was offered a job as a typist, a position she held for about 13 months, before applying and being accepted to become an English monitor. The English monitors, when she arrived, Marjory noted, were nearly all public-school girls, whom she labelled 'the hockey team', despite professing to like nearly all of them.⁶⁵ Lorna Swire, children's author, journalist and concert pianist, took a job as an English monitor at Wood Norton in 1942. She had been in Spain during the last year of the civil war with her husband, a correspondent for Reuters, and had worked at Manchester radio for a time before applying to the Monitoring Service. Lorna decided to remain working at BBC Monitoring until the 1970s, attracted by the varied company of her fellow colleagues.⁶⁶ As the need for monitors grew throughout the war, other recruits having the necessary language skills were actively sought from various institutions, including universities and foreign embassies.⁶⁷ The Monitoring Service also took

⁶³ Harold Shukman, 'Leonard Bertram Schapiro (1908-1983)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. See Appendix 2 for a full list of all supervisors and monitors who travelled to Wood Norton in August 1939.

⁶⁴ Tangye Lean, *Voices in the Darkness* (London, 1943), p.182; Gilbert Harding, *Along My Line* (The Popular Book Club, London, 1955), p.135.

⁶⁵ Marjory Todd, *Snakes & Ladders: An Autobiography*, pp.194-197.

⁶⁶ Interview with Lorna Swire.

⁶⁷ Silva, 'BBC Monitoring', p.7, KL.

advantage of any opportunity to recruit new staff from organisations that they came into contact with in the course of their work. In reply to a request for particular monitoring by the Danish Legation, the BBC stated that they found it extremely difficult to find competent Danish monitors and requested the Legation to pass on the names of any suitable Danes who would be willing to work in the country.⁶⁸

The Mayflowers

The first Monitoring employees were taken on under unusual temporary contracts, which stipulated under clause two, that their employment would continue for a period of three months, or for the duration of the national emergency, whichever should prove the shorter. If the war lasted longer than three months, the engagement was to continue for the duration of the war, unless terminated by either party on one month's written notice.⁶⁹ As it happened, the decision to mobilise was taken a week before the war's outbreak, which as Richard Marriott has stated, 'could hardly have been better timed', for it allowed for vital final preparations to be made at Wood Norton. In order to disrupt the BBC's regular monitoring as little as possible, and keep the Government supplied with coverage at a time of national emergency, a number of temporary monitoring posts were established in the final days of August.⁷⁰ Malcolm Frost, Director of Overseas Intelligence, along with three members of his staff, established a temporary service at the home of one of the employees in Seer Green, Beaconsfield. They supplied reports to government departments in London for a week, via dispatch rider, before the Wood Norton unit was in a position to take over.⁷¹ A separate team of four remained in London for four days at Chesham House, home of the RIIA monitoring experiment, to cover as much material as possible before the teleprinter line between Wood Norton and London was established. The team who remained at Chesham House was

⁶⁸ Letter Marriott to Frost, 19 Apr. 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

⁶⁹ 'Specimen Monitoring Agreement', 18 Aug. 1939, BBC:WAC R13/169/1.

⁷⁰ Note from Director M.A. Frost, 'BBC: Overseas Intelligence Department', 29 Aug. 1939, TNA INF 1/758.

⁷¹ Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom*, vol. III: *The War of Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p.187; Letter to BBC Written Archives Centre from Eleanor Pym (nee Shelmerdine), 28 May 1995, BBC: WAC S281.

composed of David Bowman, of the BBC, a new recruit, Margaret Rink, and also Bettie Knott and Mary Wilson, who had worked on the RIIA experiment under the leadership of Hallett, who had himself travelled immediately to Wood Norton on 26 August to assist in the establishment of the Service there.⁷²

The main monitoring contingent left from Broadcasting House, London, for Evesham on the so-called 'Mayflower bus' on 26 August 1939, and formally began their work at Wood Norton the same day. By 24 August 1939, 32 monitors, 24 clerical staff and 12 engineers had been formally engaged, although they were not all immediately moved to the country.⁷³ On their arrival at Evesham, the new recruits found the local residents in the middle of their annual carnival celebrations. Anatol Goldberg has remarked how, to the primarily continental European monitors, 'a carnival celebration at the end of August on the eve of a war had something apocalyptic about it.'⁷⁴ The monitors made no less of an impression on the local population, on whom they were forcibly billeted. There was a degree of xenophobic reaction against the incomers, not helped by their civilian clothes and unsociable working hours. As Marjory Todd has stated, 'few of them [the locals] ever grasped that if one came home at three o'clock in the morning it was from work and not from some unspeakable orgy.'⁷⁵ They would also, as Monitoring Service typist Margaret Pitman recalled, 'want to provide food or Hoover when we wanted to sleep.'⁷⁶ The existence of the Monitoring Service itself was publicised from as early as 1940, but the Service's actual location remained secret throughout the war, so monitors could not explain the nature of their work.⁷⁷ Despite the difficulties, many employees became involved in local societies and succeeded in forming life-long friendships within the community. There appears to have been a general expression of sadness from the town's population over the unit's eventual departure in 1943. The Monitoring Service also became a small community in itself. The BBC established a non-residential club for its employees at Greenhill

⁷² Renier & Rubinstein, pp.19-20

⁷³ Silva, 'BBC Monitoring', p. 7, KL.

⁷⁴ 'Listening to War'. BL T3631WC1.

⁷⁵ Todd, p.196.

⁷⁶ Elizabeth Lister, 'Working in the BBC Monitoring Service 1941 to 45': <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/31/a7588731.shtml>, 29 May 2011.

⁷⁷ 'The Ear of Britain', broadcast 4 Feb. 1940, BBC: WAC R19/292; *Radio Times*, 2 Feb. 1940.

Hotel, close to the centre of Evesham and departure point for the commuter bus to Wood Norton. The club contained a lounge, bar, kitchen, baths, table tennis tables and gardens, and was the scene of many dances, poetry readings and lectures, as well as being a place to meet other BBC staff in an informal setting.⁷⁸

The rarefied atmosphere at Wood Norton - created by the bringing of a disparate group of international individuals, from a variety of professional backgrounds, together in the grounds of an isolated country house - appears to have consisted of a mixture of excitement, gloom and unreality. The excitement was, in part, created by the new task that they were given to undertake. Monitoring was an entirely new process in the 1930s and no one had attempted such a large-scale monitoring operation before the BBC. Olive Renier, has written of her husband Gustaaf, that this was the aspect of the work which most attracted him:

For Gustaaf the whole monitoring enterprise became less interesting as it ceased to be a matter of innovation and adaptation, and developed, inevitably, into a large bureaucratic structure.⁷⁹

Much the same sentiment seems to have been echoed by Marjory Todd when she wrote about her arrival at Wood Norton several years into the war: 'I arrived in the Silver Age of the Monitoring Service. The Golden Age was over - that delightful pastoral.'⁸⁰ Oliver Whitley also commented that:

True to one of the paradoxes of human nature, when the Monitoring Service moved into comparatively spacious purpose built huts... the communal spirit, which had driven the pioneers to sacrificial exertions in adverse conditions, gently evaporated into something more normal, more calculating, but less exciting.⁸¹

The gloom at Wood Norton was undoubtedly created by the war, which monitors were forced to listen to being played out to an even greater extent than the average citizen, and was further heightened by the exile of many employees from their country of birth, and often their families and friends. The best description

⁷⁸ Renier & Rubinstein, pp.86-87.

⁷⁹ Renier, *Before the Bonfire*, p.105.

⁸⁰ Todd, p.196.

⁸¹ Renier & Rubinstein, p.46.

of Evesham, from this perspective, comes from later journalist and broadcaster, Gilbert Harding, who described moving from London to Evesham, along with the editorial unit, during this early wartime period.

There we were, the rag-tag and bobtail of the arts, of journalism and academic life, flung upon this quiet agricultural community with a sprinkling of sad and weary displaced persons from the Continent, long exiled from their homelands and at last employed to listen and record the story of their country's ruin.⁸²

Finally, the atmosphere of unreality at Wood Norton, arising from the contrast of its isolated and relatively safe location, with the state of war into which the world had been plunged, was augmented by the specific nature of the monitor's work - a task not out of place in the apocalyptic or science fiction novel. In a 1943 survey of BBC Monitoring, Tangye Lean described a monitor at work:

Sitting there with transparent earphones on his head and repeating with pedantic care what Helsinki had said two minutes ago, he seems to belong to a Utopian fantasy.⁸³

The Monitoring Operation

Monitors worked in three shifts of eight hours each, with six days or nights on, followed by two days off.⁸⁴ A daily conference decided which stations and what bulletins should be listened to, although certain transmissions, such as particular news bulletins, were monitored daily. Monitors checked the rota to discover their individual duties when they came on shift.⁸⁵ All signals were initially received in the reception hut about a twenty-minute walk up the hill from the main monitoring unit, which was established in a cottage within the grounds of the main house. A number of lines were installed from the receiving hut to feed transmissions directly down to the cottage. Other broadcasts were recorded in the hut on wax cylinders, using Edifone recorders, which were regularly

⁸² Harding, pp.137-138.

⁸³ Lean, p.181.

⁸⁴ George Weidenfeld, *Remembering my Good Friends: An Autobiography* (London: Harper Collins, 1994), p.96; Todd, p.200; Note 'The Monitoring Service: Hours of Work', 11 Nov. 1940, BBC:WAC R13/169/3.

⁸⁵ Lean, p.180.

transported down the hill to the listening room. In April 1940, the monitoring unit was transferred to specially equipped wooden huts, constructed in the trees lower down the hill. Here monitors were given the responsibility of tuning in and recording their own broadcasts, when reception was sufficiently good to avoid using the main aerials still controlled by engineers at the reception hut.⁸⁶

A Special Listening Section was also developed out of the initial monitoring contingent. It maintained broadcast schedules and took note of any new stations or sudden changes in broadcast behaviour. In their search for new transmitters and frequencies, the section was of vital assistance to monitors in finding their assigned programmes, and in providing new wavelengths, with better reception, for stations already monitored. The section was assisted in its task by roving monitors, who were given free reign to roam the wavelengths looking for broadcasts relating to their assigned region.⁸⁷ Roving monitors produced regular reports on broadcasting from geographical or linguistic spheres, including Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, France, Czechoslovakia, German regional stations and Arabic broadcasting. They could also produce reports on just one series of transmissions, such as a report on the Czech Hour Broadcast from Kiev and Moscow, produced in early 1941.⁸⁸ Whenever possible these monitors were natives of the countries concerned and their periodic surveys, or 'Roving Reports', thus communicated a national understanding of certain broadcast content that would perhaps not have been otherwise recognised.⁸⁹ One notable monitor John Jarvis, who had been blind from birth, was assigned to work in the Special Listening Section as a French specialist because his hearing was so good. He learned to operate the complicated receivers and recording equipment, made notes in Braille, and managed to keep note of the station frequencies as he patrolled the ether, without ever being able to see the dials. Martin Esslin recalled that, during the Norwegian campaign, Jarvis supplied vital information to the Allied Forces by detecting a faint signal emanating from northern Norway,

⁸⁶ Renier & Rubinstein, p.45.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p.68.

⁸⁸ 'Monitor's Report on the Czech Hour Broadcast from Kiev and Moscow', 26-28 Feb. & 5 Mar. 1941, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

⁸⁹ Memo written for users of BBC Monitoring, Oct. 1941, BBC: WAC R49/150.

which established that the city of Bodoe was still in Norwegian hands.⁹⁰ Regular monitors were also encouraged to produce, at irregular intervals, reports on any areas of specialist knowledge that they possessed, such as ‘The Nazi Wireless at War’ and ‘The Food Situation in Spain.’⁹¹

Monitors always made a report of monitored broadcasts in English. However, the foreign language services at the BBC requested Monitoring to produce some reports in their language of origin. The German Service, for instance, sometimes wished to quote German speeches or broadcasts in their programmes, and it was impractical to retranslate a report in English back into German, as there was no guarantee they would translate it successfully. It was therefore decided to endorse an idea of George Weidenfeld’s, to begin producing a regular selection of verbatim reports of broadcasts in their language of origin. The main item produced by BBC monitors in this respect was a digest, published five days a week entitled *Deutschlandspiegel*. The document was a collection of items taken from bulletins or talks broadcast from Germany in German, selected for their special propaganda interest.⁹² In pre-selecting the material that was circulated in this way, the Monitoring Service effectively suggested certain news items or propaganda lines that the programme or news sections may like to pursue. Similar publications were later produced for broadcasts in Italian and French.⁹³ The Monitoring Service received a number of notes expressing appreciation for these documents from BBC output departments in late 1940 and 1941. The notes stated that they had been able to use a lot of this material in their programmes.⁹⁴

Editorial

During pre-war planning for the Monitoring Service, neither the BBC nor the MoI planners had given much thought to the problem of processing and

⁹⁰ Renier & Rubinstein, pp.98-99.

⁹¹ Memorandum written for users of BBC Monitoring, Oct. 1941, BBC: WAC R49/150; ‘The Nazi Wireless at War: The German Home Service’, A Series of Essays by Members of the Monitoring Service’, July 1941, BBC:WAC E2/414.

⁹² Note ‘The Monitoring Service’, Oct. 1941, BBC: WAC R49/150.

⁹³ Interview with George Weidenfeld; Interview with Karl Lehmann, 13 Oct. 2008; Weidenfeld, *Good Friends*, pp.99-101; Memo Eur. L.S. to R.H. Baker, 16 Sep. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/414.

⁹⁴ Memo Baker to Eur. L.C., 12 Sep. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/414; Memo German programme organiser to Marriott, 24 June 1941, BBC:WAC E2/414.

distributing the large volume of material that was to be obtained.⁹⁵ Following the establishment of the Service, all monitors' translations and summarisations of broadcasts, after being checked for obvious mistakes in spelling and grammar, were teleprinted to Department EH and Broadcasting House.⁹⁶ A teleprinter link was also established at the beginning of the war to the MoI in Bloomsbury.⁹⁷

Department EH were well organised by the outbreak of war and had sufficient staff to deal with the material flowing through the teleprinter. There was, however, no available staff in the BBC news departments to organise and distribute the material to the relevant desks. Malcolm Frost, Head of Overseas Intelligence, thus formed an editorial group in the Duchess Street annexe of Broadcasting House, to summarise and collate the monitoring transcripts into a daily publication.⁹⁸ On 28 August 1939, they issued their first document: 'The Digest of Foreign Bulletins'. 'The Daily Digest', as it soon became known, was produced in foolscap and reproduced by Roneo duplication machines.⁹⁹ By 1 November 1939, the document ran to as many as 30,000 words a day and was dispatched to about twenty-five government agencies, including the War Office, Foreign Office, MoI, MEW, Admiralty and Air Ministry.¹⁰⁰ Estimates made during the war claimed that the Daily Digest was between a tenth and a twentieth of the size - in terms of number of words - of the collected monitor's transcripts on which it was based. In early 1940, for instance, it was stated that the editorial team received between 300 to 400 thousand words from the monitors, which they reduced to a Digest of around 30 thousand words.¹⁰¹ In 1943 it was stated that monitors took down and transcribed about a million words, which were condensed into a Digest of between 50 to 60,000 words.¹⁰²

⁹⁵ John Campbell, *Listening to the World* (London: British Broadcasting House, 1967), p.5; Marriott, 'BBC Monitoring', Association of Broadcasting Staff Bulletin. KL.

⁹⁶ Marriott, 'BBC Monitoring', Association of Broadcasting Staff Bulletin. KL.

⁹⁷ Letter Beresford to Waterfield, 27 Aug. 1939, TNA INF 1/329.

⁹⁸ Note BBC Overseas Intelligence Department, 29 Aug. 1938, TNA INF 1/758; Marriott, 'BBC Monitoring', Association of Broadcasting Staff Bulletin, KL; Malcolm Frost, 'Monumentum Summ Respicit', Association of Broadcasting Staff Bulletin (1960), KL.

⁹⁹ John Kewell, 'The Editorial Roundabout', Association of Broadcasting Staff Bulletin (1960), KL.

¹⁰⁰ 'Information From Overseas Broadcasts: A Continuous Watch', 1 Nov. 1939, BBC: WAC R34/476; Report BBC Monitoring Service, 6 Dec. 1939, BBC: WAC R34/476.

¹⁰¹ Report BBC Monitoring Service, February 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

¹⁰² A. White, 'BBC at War' n.d. (c.1943), p.29. IWM: Duxford.

In 1940 the editorial section was relocated from London to two specially built huts at Wood Norton, where they could deal with all monitored transcripts on site, only teleprinting urgent items to a small remaining section of the Service in London for distribution. This, as Marriott stated, 'was an essential step in making a unified and efficient service', and went some way towards dealing with the difficulties, anticipated long before by Hallett at the RIIA, of separating the process of monitoring into isolated sections.¹⁰³

In order to further the usability of BBCM material and reach new consumers, a separate report writing section developed within the editorial unit. Working overnight, they produced, from the original monitor's transcripts, a daily Monitoring Report of approximately three thousand words. This provided a survey of the monitored output of world broadcasting during the preceding twenty-four hours. Its main purpose was to provide customers who did not have the time to read the whole Digest, with a briefer document of what was being said. It also acted as an introduction and guide to the larger Digest. From 1 January 1940, the section also took over the responsibility, from the MoI, of producing a daily report to the War Cabinet. This document was essentially a condensed version of the Monitoring Report.¹⁰⁴ Gustaaf Renier, David Hallett, Gilbert Harding and Christopher Saltmarshe, were all employed as report writers during the war.¹⁰⁵

The Information Bureau

At the beginning of the war, it was not only the vast amounts of material arriving at Broadcasting House that presented logistical difficulties for the BBC. They were also inundated by questions regarding BBCM from Whitehall departments. It was further recognised that the Daily Digest would not always convey certain types of material to consumers quickly enough for it to be useful. Frost dealt with both these problems by nominating Major C. E. (Bill) Wakeham to establish the forerunner of the News or Information Bureau, which was formally

¹⁰³ Marriott, 'BBC Monitoring', Association of Broadcasting Staff Bulletin, KL.

¹⁰⁴ Renier & Rubinstein, p.41.

¹⁰⁵ Saltmarshe, 'In retrospective', Association of Broadcasting Staff Bulletin, KL; Renier, *Before the Bonfire*, p.98.

established on 2 December 1939.¹⁰⁶ The unit answered all consumer enquiries and provided a 'Flash' service of monitored material, judged to be of immediate news or intelligence value. Wakeham and his team initially contacted consumer departments by telephone, but in May 1940 several teleprinter lines were installed between the Bureau and key departments, including The War Office, Air Ministry, Admiralty, Foreign Office, Home Office, MoI, Press & Censorship Bureau, Department EH and the Home and Overseas departments of the BBC.¹⁰⁷ An Information Editor (External) supplied the intelligence departments of the War Ministries with items of urgent importance, whilst an Information Editor (Internal) supplied the Home and Overseas departments of the BBC with news and propaganda material for use in their radio bulletins.¹⁰⁸

As the Information Bureau was responsible for selecting the appropriate material to send to different BBCM consumers, they were the most aware, theoretically at least, as to what sort of material should be monitored. In July 1940, a branch of the Information Bureau was established at Wood Norton, in order to improve the link between the monitoring process and consumer requirements. This was the beginning of a new 'confessional' monitoring system at Wood Norton, whereby all monitors having finished listening to a bulletin gave an immediate oral report of its content to a Bureau supervisor – a process called 'confessing'. The supervisor would then select which items were Flashes, requiring immediate transmission to London, and direct the monitor to transcribe those first.¹⁰⁹ The idea behind this system was to allow monitors to act almost as 'translation machines', leaving the Information Bureau to pick out the salient points.¹¹⁰

In order to convey particularly important items, such as speeches by Hitler, as quickly as possible to consumers, a system of 'Flash' monitoring was developed. This was a method by which monitors would listen to five to ten minute sections

¹⁰⁶ 'Information From Overseas Broadcasting', 1 Nov. 1939, BBC: WAC E2/405/1; Frost, 'Momentum Summ Respicit', Association of Broadcasting Staff Bulletin, KL; Memo DOI to AC(C), 20 Dec. 1939, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

¹⁰⁷ Renier & Rubinstein, pp.39; 41.

¹⁰⁸ Note BBC Monitoring Service, n.d. (c. Feb. 1940), BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

¹⁰⁹ Memo produced for benefit of Monitoring consumers, Oct. 1941, BBC:WAC R49/150.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Lorna Swire.

of the item in rotation. They would then dictate their translated section directly on to the teleprinter, whilst another monitor listened to the next section.¹¹¹

Finally, the Information Bureau also established a separate index records section, which helped in answering customer inquiries, assisted broadcast analysis and allowed monitors to check if a broadcast they listened to was a repeat. The index section initially started as two separate units, encompassing a headline section, which assigned each news item with an official headline, and a repeat index section, which kept a record of all bulletins in which a news item was broadcast. The index section was initially established at the request of Department EH in order to assist their statistical analyses.¹¹² It was first based in London but moved to Evesham, along with editorial, in July 1940, where it rapidly expanded, from a staff of one, to a staff of 15 by November 1940.¹¹³

The central index was composed of 146 main subject and country headings, and approximately 3300 subdivisions.¹¹⁴ Items could be cross-referenced in different index subdivisions to ease their identification. For instance, an item on Soviet plane losses, designated as 'War Soviet: Gen.' could also have been cross-referenced under 'War Soviet: Axis Air Attacks' and 'War Soviet: Plane Losses'.¹¹⁵ Each news item in German and Italian-controlled broadcasts was indexed from monitors' transcripts. A senior clerk read each reported bulletin and assigned each item with a designation, or designations, in the central index. A news clerk studied the annotated transcript and collected the appropriate folders from the central index. They then typed a summary of the unedited copy straight into the correct subject category in the index. They could also suggest additional cross-references for the items. At its height, the section made approximately 1200 to 1500 entries into the index each day, drawn from 130 broadcasts.¹¹⁶ There was also a separate talks index, which included the same categories as the news index. This, however, was created from the Digest, and

¹¹¹ Weidenfeld, *Good Friends*, p. 99.

¹¹² Paper no. 984, 17 Dec. 1941, BBC:WAC R13/171.

¹¹³ Memo MEx to DoI, 26 June 1940, BBC:WAC R13/169/2; Memo Phillips to DMS, 5 Nov. 1940, BBC:WAC R13/169/3.

¹¹⁴ 'Amalgamation of Headlines & Index Records', n.d. (c.1943), BBC:WAC E8/208/1.

¹¹⁵ 'Index Section: Functions and Methods', n.d., BBC:WAC E8/208/1.

¹¹⁶ 'Index Section 1943-1945', Apr. 1945, BBC:WAC E8/208/1.

so there was an approximate 36-hour delay between the broadcasting of any talk and its entry into the index.¹¹⁷ As well as receiving an approximate 100 queries from monitors during each 24-hour period, the index section also received about 200 queries each month from outside the Monitoring Service.¹¹⁸

Secret Tasks, Y Unit and Press Circuits

The Monitoring Service was essentially created to monitor open radio voice broadcasts. At the beginning of the war, however, any organisation in possession of radio receiving equipment and engineers did what they could for the war effort. During the first months of the war, engineers, stationed both at Wood Norton and the BBC receiving station at Tatsfield, took down a number of transmissions on behalf of the Service Ministries. Tatsfield, for instance, took down German Naval transmissions in four letter code, in Morse, on behalf of the Admiralty, until the Admiralty wrote in December to state they were now managing to receive these particular transmissions themselves.¹¹⁹

The main work of a secret nature conducted by the BBC began in July 1940, when another reception unit known as the Y Unit was transferred to Evesham. The Y-Unit was a successor to an establishment set up by MI8 (also referred to as the Radio Security Service (RSS)), in Richborough, Kent, for the purpose of watching enemy broadcasts to investigate rumours broadcast in English from Germany. Although the BBC administratively ran the unit and recruited German and English monitors to work there, it was ultimately responsible to MI8, with operating instructions given by both them and MI5.¹²⁰ Y Unit was located in a separate hut at Wood Norton and those who worked there were not allowed to talk about their work, although they did mingle socially with M Unit employees and made use of the same staff facilities in Evesham. In November 1943, following a Monitoring Service reorganisation, some duties of the Y Unit became incorporated into the newly formed Reception Unit at Caversham, where

¹¹⁷ 'Index Section: Functions and Methods' n.d., BBC:WAC E8/208/1.

¹¹⁸ 'Headlines Monitoring Unit', Apr. 1942, BBC:WAC E8/208/1.

¹¹⁹ Resume of interception at Tatsfield, Oct. – Nov. 1939, BBC:WAC R53/155/1; Letter Intelligence Division, Naval Staff to L.W. Hayes (Engineer), 26 Dec. 1939, BBC:WAC R53/155/1.

¹²⁰ Memo MEx to Chesterton, 27 Nov. 1942, BBC:WAC R13/169/3.

they became part of the regular monitoring schedule. At the same time, the more secret aspects of their work were assigned to MI6 and relocated.¹²¹

The duties of Y Unit, as first established under the BBC, were mainly twofold. Firstly, they kept a continuous watch over the enemy broadcasting stations most reliably received in Britain and therefore potentially used for the conveying of secret messages to secret agents within the country. It was primarily with this intention in mind that the Y Unit undertook regular monitoring of the British 'Freedom Stations' or 'black' broadcasting stations originating from Germany. These were broadcasts from Germany purporting to come from disaffected groups within Britain. There were six in all, including the New British Broadcasting Station (NBBS), Worker's Challenge, the Christian Peace Movement, Radio National, which had an essentially fascist line, and those appealing to separate nationalist sentiment, Radio Caledonia, for Scotland, and Welsh National Radio. The Monitoring Service produced a document entitled 'Enemy Instructions for Rumour in Britain', which analysed the daily output of NBBS in particular. This was undertaken mainly for the benefit of the Mol's Anti-rumour section.¹²² Secondly, the Unit kept a continuous watch on the BBC's Home and Forces wavelengths, and later also the medium-wave European Service wavelengths, in order to detect any enemy attempt to use them to reach listeners in Britain. For instance, concerns were raised by the Head of Engineering, L.W. Hayes, in July 1940 that a foreign carrier, issuing a tuning note, possibly emanating from Brussels, had been heard for short periods on a wavelength used by British broadcasting, when no station was on the air.¹²³

The Y Unit developed its own Special Listening Section, whose monitors worked in the control room on the top of the hill, searching for unusual station behaviour, as well as looking for specified transmissions. More reliance was placed on the judgement and initiative of these roving monitors, which led to a

¹²¹ Note by J.B. Shankland on Y Unit, 16 June 1941, BBC: WAC R34/476.

¹²² Memo DES to DBD, 25 Sep. 1940, BBC:WAC R53/155/2; Memo C(O) to DMS, 23 Sep. 1940, BBC:WAC R53/155/2.

¹²³ Horst Bergmeier and Rainer Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves: The Inside Story of Nazi Radio Broadcasting and Propaganda Swing* (New Haven & London, Yale University Press: 1997), p.205-216; Memo HOEID to C(E), 3 July 1940, BBC:WAC R53/155/1; Memo OPA to AC (E), 16 July 1940, BBC:WAC R53/155/1.

request to upgrade their salary in August 1941.¹²⁴ As the Unit developed it also undertook special investigations for MI5, the Admiralty and the Air Ministry. For instance, they kept a continuous watch on a number of continental home stations, as the abrupt disappearance of a broadcast often signified air activity in or near a station; intelligence of interest to the RAF.¹²⁵ One of the more abstract requests received by Y Unit monitors was a directive to immediately call the Air Ministry if any song containing the name Peter was played, and the Admiralty if a particular Italian radio station played the tune of 'The Anthem of the Submariners', which proved somewhat difficult as no-one actually knew how the tune went.¹²⁶

Y Unit also regularly monitored and analysed some features of 'white' or non-secret broadcasts. Whereas M Unit listened to news, speeches and talks, Y Unit monitored material that did not need transcribing but rather required general analysis, particularly music and entertainment programmes. They issued special papers on the German use of music, and made recommendations as to British policy regarding the amount and type of music they should use in their own broadcasts to Germany.¹²⁷ They also issued special reports on the content of entertainment programmes, such as book talks and plays, and tried to reconstruct the organisation of their production in Germany. This and the regular monitoring of the freedom stations were the duties taken over by the main reception unit once the Service moved to Caversham in 1943.¹²⁸

BBCM also monitored a number of press circuits. TASS dictation speed broadcasts for the Soviet Provincial Press were slugged (headlined) regularly, from mid-1942.¹²⁹ The most notable of these press circuits was DNB (Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro), an advance service for the German press. Originally transmitted by telephony broadcast at dictation speed, it abruptly switched in the

¹²⁴ Memo MSeX to OEO, 25 Aug. 1941, BBC:WAC R13/171.

¹²⁵ Renier & Rubinstein, p.71; Memo EiC, Tatsfield to OEID, 10 Dec. 1940, BBC:WAC R53/155/1.

¹²⁶ 'Listening to War', BL T3631WC1.

¹²⁷ 'Standard of Music in BBC Transmissions in Germany' (n.d.); 'The Place of Music in German Broadcasting', 15 Sep. 1941, both BBC:WAC E2/414.

¹²⁸ 'The Nazi Wireless at War: The German Home Service', July 1941; 'The German Overseas Service', Jan. 1942, both BBC: WAC E2/414.

¹²⁹ Memo Lampson to DMS, 9 June 1943, BBC:WAC R13/169/7.

summer of 1940 to using Hellschreiber transmission. This was essentially a form of wireless teleprinter, where the signal came out of a special Hellschreiber machine as printed words on a tape. Monitoring of the service by the BBC provided the British Government with an important news source, several hours before German radio announcements, and further gave notice as to official German censorship stops, which proved useful in the preparation of British propaganda. Indeed, at a meeting of the Joint Planning and Broadcasting Committees in September 1939, the representative from Department EH stated that his organisation only received DNB through Monitoring.¹³⁰ In May 1940, the discovery that all German High Command communiqués were issued on this service first, significantly prior to anywhere else, further led to a request from Department EH for the BBC Monitoring Service to institute more regular coverage of the transmissions.¹³¹

Morse monitoring, particularly of the German-controlled Transocean news service, was also carried out by the Foreign Office unit at Beaconsfield and by the Post Office, which resulted in a lack of coordination or proper analysis of news agency monitoring. One step towards simplifying the situation was taken when Beaconsfield began to send their material to the BBC's London Information Bureau, so it could be amalgamated with that collected at Wood Norton. Coverage remained divided and erratic, however, at the same time as consumer demands for increased coverage of these services grew. In late 1941, following a meeting between the institutions involved, it was decided to remedy the situation by assigning responsibility for the co-ordination of all forms of monitoring, except Service traffic still done by the Service ministries, to BBC Monitoring. Approval was given to transfer the publication of material from Beaconsfield to Wood Norton on 11 June 1942, and the Morse Unit was finally transferred from the Foreign Office on 7 April 1943.¹³²

¹³⁰ Meeting JPBC, 27 Sep 1939, TNA FO 898/7.

¹³¹ Memo DDOI to Dunkerley, 24 May 1940; Memo Dunkerley to DDOI, 21 May 1940, both BBC:WAC R53/155/1.

¹³² Note 'Co-ordination of Monitoring', 10 Dec. 1941, BBC:WAC R34/476; Note 'Co-ordination of Monitoring', 31 Dec. 1941, BBC: WAC E2/411.

International Monitoring Cooperation, Expansion and the Move to Caversham

In October 1962, as the world hovered on the brink of nuclear war, the BBC Monitoring Service at Caversham monitored the message from Nikita Khrushchev, on Moscow Radio, directed to President Kennedy. The message, announcing the decision to dismantle the Soviet missiles in Cuba, was immediately translated and sent to the White House, allowing Kennedy to issue an immediate reply, and so bring the Cuban Missile Crisis to an end.¹³³ This extraordinary state of affairs, by which the United States relied for the entirety of the Cold War on BBC Monitoring's coverage and translation of all broadcasting from the USSR, can only be explained by the establishment of a precedent for collaboration during the Second World War.

A number of privately owned news media organisations in the United States began monitoring shortwave broadcasts from abroad in early 1939, but the first serious American effort to study these broadcasts was made by the School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University.¹³⁴ The experiment, begun in the final months of 1939, bore a resemblance to that conducted by the RIIA before the war in that it was also funded by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. In December, Tracey Kittredge of the Rockefeller Foundation wrote to Macadam, at the RIIA, when the Princeton experiment was in its planning stages, to request information about monitoring in the UK.¹³⁵ Macadam promptly wrote to Tallents at the MoI to request guidance as to what information could be sent, and whether they could have copies of the Digest.¹³⁶ Tallents replied that the Ministry had decided that the Digest, as distinct from the Daily Notes, the forerunner of the Monitoring Reports, could be made available,

¹³³ Silva, 'BBC Monitoring', p.28, KL; Interview with Alan Sanders, conducted by Laura Johnson on 2 Oct. 2009.

¹³⁴ Joseph E. Roop, *Foreign Broadcast Information Service History, Part 1: 1941 – 1947* (1969), p.4: <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/foreign-broadcast-information-service/index.html>, 27 May 2011.

¹³⁵ Letter Kittredge to Macadam, 11 Dec. 1939, Chatham House 9/39a.

¹³⁶ Letter Macadam to Tallents, 27 Dec. 1939, Chatham House 9/39a.

provided it was treated as confidential. So the Princeton investigation received BBCM reports from its inception.¹³⁷

The State Department and Department of Justice, however, decided that the United States could not rely on private institutions to inform them of the content of foreign broadcasts and, in January 1941, called on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to establish a broadcast monitoring service. The Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service (FBMS) was formally established on 26 February 1941. A number of employees from the former Princeton experiment were invited to join the new FBMS, to utilise their previous experience and knowledge to build up the new service. The new official service therefore inherited staff with existing contacts with monitoring in Britain.¹³⁸

The close contact established between BBC Monitoring and FBIS shaped the way monitoring developed in the United States. For instance, the Director of FBMS, Lloyd Free, following his experience of the BBC Monitoring Service (as well as monitoring at Princeton, and a similar experiment at Stanford), encouraged FBMS not to concentrate too heavily on the analysis of broadcast content, and instead produce transcriptions and summaries for the benefit of other users.¹³⁹

The start of British-American monitoring cooperation began, however, when the FCC in America, unable to pick up many European broadcasts, decided to approach BBC Monitoring for assistance. The original idea was to supply America with the Flash service already in operation, but Lloyd Free concluded that this service would be too short for their purposes, and the Digest, although adequate in content, reached Washington too late to be useful. Lloyd Free arrived in London at the beginning of December 1941 to make arrangements. It was decided that the greater part of the FCC outpost should work at Wood Norton, on the original monitor's reports, where they could select reports, in the

¹³⁷ Letter Tallents to Macadam, 6 Jan. 1940, Chatham House 9/39a.

¹³⁸ Roop, pp. 6-7.

¹³⁹ Ibid., pp. 19-20.

light of their own requirements, to transmit to America.¹⁴⁰ By May 1945, the London office of the FCC was filing 42,000 words a day to FBIS headquarters.¹⁴¹

In return for free BBCM material and office space, Lloyd Free offered to supply cabled US monitoring information to the BBC, at FCC expense. The Service was thus able to receive reports of broadcasts, particularly in Chinese and Japanese, which they would not have otherwise been able to receive.¹⁴² The Monitoring Service initially received a daily file from Washington, which included material monitored by FBMS outposts in Portland, Puerto Rico and Kingsville. In February 1943, the daily file was replaced by a running cable service.¹⁴³

In addition to the FCC, the Office of War Information (OWI), which had its own media analysis branch to prepare counter-propaganda, also received BBCM material. They initially just received information via the FCC, but on 9 December 1942, OWI decided to send their own editors to Evesham. They worked under the supervision of FBMS, but established their own wire service supplying information to the United States.¹⁴⁴ FBMS and OWI also supplied the MoI with material directly from 14 April 1943, and the MoI, in return, supplied them with information obtained through a monitoring operation they had established, independently of the BBC, at Cairo, in late 1943.¹⁴⁵

BBCM material therefore had a huge reach within the United States. As Joseph Roop stated in his history of FBIS, '[a] list of all the US Government offices with which FBIS had contacts during its first half dozen years would be almost the equivalent of a U.S. Government directory.'¹⁴⁶ By the end of the war, the BBC Monitoring Digests and the Monitoring Reports were themselves being sent to the American Embassy in London and a number of individual US recipients,

¹⁴⁰ Memo Clark to DDG and DG, 2 Dec. 1941, BBC:WAC E1/185.

¹⁴¹ Roop, pp.252.

¹⁴² Note of meeting to discuss FCC outpost in England, 10 Dec. 1941, BBC: WAC E1/185.

¹⁴³ Roop, p.168.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 122-123; 134.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 130; 168; 172; 181.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 155.

including Eisenhower.¹⁴⁷ FBIS also shared their reports with other nations, further extending the reach of the Monitoring Service's work, as shown by correspondence relating to the decision of the Canadian authorities to make use of the FCC and BBC Monitoring network, rather than establish their own. The British were particularly concerned to make it clear to Canada that in receiving FCC material they would be indirectly indebted to London, which it was believed supplied about fifty percent of the material in FBIS summaries.¹⁴⁸

BBCM material was also shared with a number of exiled European Governments established within Britain. In May 1940 it was decided to send a copy of the Daily Digest to the Dutch Cabinet, and also supply them with a complete set of Digests since the day of invasion.¹⁴⁹ In June 1940, it was further decided to send copies of the Digest to the Belgian embassy.¹⁵⁰ By January 1945, as a BBC distribution list makes clear, the Digest and Monitoring Report were supplied daily to the Yugoslav legation, the Czech Government, French Provisional Government, Polish Government, Norwegian Government, Belgian Government and the Turkish Ambassador. Copies of both the Digest and Monitoring Report were also supplied to the Australian Executive and the Soviet Embassy.¹⁵¹ On some occasions this arrangement continued beyond the end of the war. The Czech Government continued to receive BBC Monitoring reporting into 1946.¹⁵²

BBCM material also came to be supplied to national and international news services. The issue of supplying the Digest to the Press was first raised at a MoI meeting in October 1939, but the issue was dropped after *Reuters* stated that they would have no interest in receiving the Digest, and declared that in their opinion no other agency would either.¹⁵³ The issue was raised again in February 1940, when it was decided the Digest could be made available, through the MoI, to accredited news agencies, for a fee of £500 per annum, or £10 for a one-week

¹⁴⁷ Memo ADMS to AC (OS), 27 Jan. 1945, BBC:WAC R34/279/1.

¹⁴⁸ Memo Clark to AC(OS), 10 Apr. 1943; Memo R.A. Rendall to Clark, 12 Apr. 1943, both BBC: WAC E2/407/1.

¹⁴⁹ Memo DDOI to Phillips, 27 May 1940, BBC:WAC E2/409/2.

¹⁵⁰ Memo Bayliss, Information Bureau to Phillips, 2 June 1940, BBC:WAC E2/409/2.

¹⁵¹ Memo ADMS to AC(OS), 27 Jan. 1945, BBC:WAC R34/279/1.

¹⁵² Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom*, vol. IV: *Sound and Vision* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p.159.

¹⁵³ Memo C(PR) to DDG, 24 Oct. 1939, BBC:WAC E2/413.

trial period.¹⁵⁴ The annual fee proved ambitious, but by January 1945 the Daily Digest was being supplied for £10, and the Monitoring Report for £25, to a large number of news outlets, including the *Daily Worker*, *The Economist*, *Evening Standard*, *Observer*, *Daily Express*, *Revue of World Affairs*, *Allied Newspapers*, *Le Marsillaise*, *Provincial newspapers Ltd.*, *Melbourne Herald Cable Service*, *Reuters*, *Truth Newspaper of Australia*, *Associated Press* and the *Australian Associated Newspapers Cable Service*.¹⁵⁵

As the war progressed and an increasing number of demands for full coverage of particular languages were made, it was realised that alternative premises would have to be found for the Monitoring Service, if it was to continue to meet consumer demands. This conviction stemmed both from the physical limitations of space and resources at Wood Norton, and also from consumer demands for the recording of weak and distant signals, which the receiving equipment and reception conditions at Wood Norton made impossible. The desire to unite all press circuit monitoring within the BBC Service, as well as expand coverage of these services, furthered the conviction that BBC Monitoring would have to move.¹⁵⁶

The Head of the Monitoring Service, Richard Marriott, first raised the possibility of finding alternative premises in early 1941 and various locations were researched. Although there was wide agreement over the necessity of moving the Service, the ultimate choice of the former Oratory School at Caversham, Reading, caused a large division between the young Monitoring heads and the then Director-General of the BBC, Frederick Ogilvie. Caversham had initially seemed a promising location for the move. Nearer to London, it offered the necessary accommodation and was located some distance from any broadcasting station, which limited the danger of electrical interference. Reception tests, however, proved unsatisfactory and the scheme was adapted to include the additional acquisition of land at nearby Crowsley Park, where reception was

¹⁵⁴ Memo of meeting, 7 Feb. 1940, BBC:WAC R44/276/1.

¹⁵⁵ Memo ADMS to AC(OS), 27 Jan. 1945, BBC:WAC R34/279/1.

¹⁵⁶ An example of the difficulties meeting consumer demands for coverage occurred in August and September 1942, when demands for coverage of weak Balkan broadcasts and extensive Russian broadcasting could not be met. (Note 'Monitoring of Russian Broadcasts in German', by M. L. G. Balfour, 30 Aug. 1942, TNA FO 898/13.)

better and there was space to erect special aerial arrays, designed for listening to more distant medium-wave continental stations.¹⁵⁷ Marriott, as Head of the Monitoring Service, and the two unit heads, Oliver Whitley and John Shankland, still expressed concern at the adapted scheme. They argued that the proposal to divide broadcast receiving (at Crowsley), from monitoring (at Caversham), would put BBCM organisationally back to the first months of the war. Much of the confusion arose due to the fact, unknown to Marriott and the other Monitoring leaders, that a decision had been taken to move as many as possible of the BBC's services out of London, which necessitated that new premises be rapidly identified for Monitoring, as Wood Norton was required as a wartime reserve base for the other BBC departments. This decision also meant that almost all the remaining Monitoring personnel in London had to be moved to the country, necessitating both larger premises and a move of the whole Service nearer to London, for purposes of communication with customers and distribution of reports.¹⁵⁸

The conflict came to a head when Ogilvie visited Wood Norton in December 1941, expressly to explain the situation and reassure staff, and proceeded to bar Marriott, Whitley and Shankland from the meeting. The three heads resigned from the Service in protest to join the armed forces, Shankland never to return. Although Ogilvie's reasoning may have been sound, his lack of real understanding and tact in this matter led in no small part to his own departure from the BBC on 26 January 1942, actually prior to the departure of the last of the 'rebels' from the Monitoring Service four days later.¹⁵⁹ The official explanation for Ogilvie's resignation - given by Brendan Bracken, Minister for Information, to the House of Commons - was that wartime conditions, with the great growth of the organisation and increased complexity of the administrative and financial problems, called for a chief executive with different qualities and experience.¹⁶⁰ The public reaction to the news of Ogilvie's resignation, however, was the most interesting aspect about the affair, for it was viewed as a move by

¹⁵⁷ Record of BBC Monitoring Service move from Evesham to Caversham, March 1943, BBC: WAC R34/476.

¹⁵⁸ Memo on administrative advantages of Evesham, 11 Nov. 1941, BBC:WAC R13/169/5.

¹⁵⁹ Silva, 'BBC Monitoring', pp.17-18, KL.

¹⁶⁰ House of Commons, 4 Feb. 1942, in *The Times*, 5 Feb. 1942.

the MoI to establish complete control of home broadcasting.¹⁶¹ On 28 January, *The Times* ran an article stating that the public had learned of the resignation of Ogilvie with some uneasiness. Although recognising Ogilvie came to Broadcasting House without experience of large-scale administration, it was stated:

Ogilvie's reputation for integrity of character and independence of opinion was welcomed and appreciated as a guarantee of the maintenance of the high traditions of the Corporation over which he was called to preside. This guarantee was felt to be essential in the days of peace. It is still more necessary in time of war entails – if the credit and influence of the broadcasting services are not to suffer.¹⁶²

Despite official refutations, questions were still being asked in the House of Commons in February, as to whether the BBC reorganisation meant more 'dictatorial control of the BBC by the Ministry of Information'.¹⁶³

Following the resignations, plans for the move of the Service from Evesham to Caversham continued throughout 1942 and early 1943. The logistical task of moving so many employees into the area was enormous. By February 1943, the total number of Monitoring employees that would be moved into the Caversham area was estimated at 800. In order to avoid losing valuable female employees who had young children, it was decided to acquire a large house in the Caversham area, informally called 'the mummery' which was run along the lines of a hostel.¹⁶⁴

The move to Caversham finally took place in spring 1943, staggered over two days in order to prevent disruption. Within a fortnight the London Information Bureau closed down and the unit was moved to Caversham. The Service, already well established by the time of the move, continued to thrive and expand. By August 1944, BBC Monitoring was listening to about one and a quarter

¹⁶¹ Briggs, *War of Words*, p.363.

¹⁶² *The Times*, 28 Jan. 1942.

¹⁶³ House of Commons, 4 Feb. 1942, in *The Times*, 5 Feb. 1942; House of Commons, 12 Feb. 1942, in *The Times*, 12 Feb. 1942.

¹⁶⁴ Memo from Brendan Bracken, 6 Feb. 1943, BBC:WAC R42/94; Interview with Lorna Swire.

million words a day, in 32 languages.¹⁶⁵ By the end of the war, the total staff at Caversham had nearly reached a thousand.¹⁶⁶

A few employees regarded the work of the Monitoring Service to be less interesting or important during the last years of the war, as Marjory Todd stated in her autobiography, 'I had begun to feel that what the enemy said was less important than it had been. From now on we would be telling them and the German Monitoring Service – or whatever they had – could take over.'¹⁶⁷ Caversham, however, retained a special cosmopolitan atmosphere and the working conditions there were, if anything, more comfortable. With many staff choosing to come into work on their days off, to make use of the library, grounds and canteen, Karl Lehmann recalled that: '[i]t was a very sociable place to work...In fact the building was almost like a club and the service was like one big family'.¹⁶⁸ Although employees had begun by thinking this was only war work, and some moved on to other things, both during and at the end of the war, many others were called back to the Service in 1945 and made it their long-term career.

Conclusion

The factor most former monitors recall most vividly about their wartime experience was the extraordinary atmosphere that permeated the whole Service. The unusually young Monitoring heads managed to create a relaxed and friendly atmosphere - an atmosphere particularly conducive to the innovations and adaptations necessary to develop a new organisational structure and establish a new profession of monitoring. Furthermore, the extraordinary collection of individuals, from different countries and professional backgrounds, contributed, in the words of one monitor to the Service possessing an, 'ethos of its own'.¹⁶⁹ It was primarily this ethos which encouraged a large number of wartime employees

¹⁶⁵ Briggs, *War of Words*, p.44.

¹⁶⁶ Campbell, p.5.

¹⁶⁷ Todd, p.2.

¹⁶⁸ Interview with Karl Lehmann..

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

to make Monitoring their lifelong career, providing essential continuity of operation in the Service's work into the, peace and then, Cold War period.

The BBC Monitoring Service developed from a core of individuals who had experience of the working practices of the two very different pre-war monitoring experiments in Britain, conducted by the BBC and the RIIA. The purposes of these experiments were combined in the new Monitoring Service at the outbreak of war, along with a number of new duties, including some confidential work, as the Service sought to assist the war effort in any way in which it was able. Perhaps the most striking factor about the establishment of the BBC Monitoring Service during this period was that it developed the working practices and infrastructure first, before any other country in the Allied block. Not only did BBC Monitoring provide a key source of information for the Governments exiled in Britain throughout the war, it also impacted the development of monitoring procedures and collection priorities in the United States. It thus established the basis of a bilateral agreement - formalised after the war in 1948 - by which Britain and the United States divided the monitoring of the world between them along geographic lines, leaving America dependent on BBC monitoring of Soviet broadcasts for the duration of the Cold War.

This chapter has shown that there were initial security concerns about the distribution of BBCM material, as demonstrated by the MoI's allowance at the beginning of the war that the Daily Notes, as opposed to the Digests, could be made available to the Princeton Listening Centre. In this case, the more confidential categorising of the Daily Notes, the forerunner of the Monitoring Report, seemed to be based on the fact the material had undergone greater selection, and therefore implicit analysis. This decision was revised, however, and although distribution was still restricted and subject to approval by the MoI, copies of both the Digests and Monitoring Reports were distributed widely to exiled European Governments, to the United States, the Soviet Embassy, and press outlets of wide political persuasion. No exception to confidentiality conditions seems to have been made for the news agency monitoring, which was included in the Digests and Monitoring Reports, even though this material was

far less readily accessible to the public than voice broadcasting, and monitoring it occasionally required specialist equipment.

The sharing of monitored material during the war, particularly originating, as it did, from collaboration between the pre-war academic-led monitoring experiments, represents an historic instance of international open source collaboration. The encouraging of Monitoring staff to write reports on their areas of broadcast expertise, and the support given to Weidenfeld's plan to produce documents of selected quotations in their language of origin, further demonstrates a historic willingness to draw on the individual expertise contained within the Service.

Chapter 3

Collection Priorities and Station Coverage

The coverage of the monitoring service and its growth have been dictated by the demands of those Government departments which it is intended to serve.¹

This statement, made in a short anonymous note covering the scope and development of BBC Monitoring up to the end of 1939, encapsulated the driving force behind the collection priority setting of the Service throughout the war. This statement initially seems to confirm the validity of the classic intelligence cycle, by which consumers, or end users, of intelligence set the priorities of collection agencies. In reality, however, the process was not that simple. In accordance with the assertions of recent intelligence theorists, end users rarely provided collection guidance, due to both security concerns and ignorance, as to what they wanted and as to what BBC Monitoring could potentially provide.² So Monitoring Service employees, although always driven by the desire to provide consumers with useful information, did not always conduct their work in the light of real knowledge as to what this might be.

The British Government, as analysers and users of BBCM material, nevertheless did send a number of collection requests to the Service during the war, as did the BBC news and talks departments and the Governments of other countries. Although by no means amounting to adequate levels of guidance to determine the entire collection priorities of the Monitoring Service throughout the war, this chapter will examine these requests and the dialogue that followed from them.

¹ Note BBC Monitoring Service, 6 Dec. 1939, BBC:WAC R34/476.

² Arthur S. Hulnick, 'Intelligence Producer-Consumer Relations in the Electronic Era', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, 24:4 (2011), p.750; George F. Treverton, *Reshaping National Intelligence for an Age of Information* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.106.

The requests received by consumers fell into two categories, which this chapter will examine separately. The first section will examine the requests made to BBC Monitoring to record particular information in the broadcasting that was monitored. The second section will examine requests received from the British Government, the BBC and the Governments of other countries to monitor particular transmissions, such as those emanating from a certain country or transmitting station, or those broadcast in a particular language. This latter section will also outline the basic coverage developed by BBC Monitoring during the war, as determined from a combination of requests, dialogue with consumers and the Service's own knowledge and expertise.

This exploration of the collection priorities of the wartime Monitoring Service seeks to fulfil three objectives. Firstly, it seeks to demonstrate the range of broadcast coverage and the scale of the wartime monitoring operation. Secondly, it aims to explore, with the aid of examples, how collection was determined in these limited cases by dialogue between the Monitoring Service, as collector, and government and BBC departments, as analysts and consumers. This is an important factor to consider because regular dialogue between collection agencies and users, particularly analysts, is frequently advocated as the solution to the mutual difficulties of ignorance, as to what information consumers need and what information collectors can provide.³ Thirdly, by assessing the importance of dialogue between the Monitoring Service and their consumers in these limited cases, this chapter will begin to consider whether more knowledge sharing would have increased the value of BBCM during the war.

Requests for Content

Consumer requests for particular types of information were used by BBC Monitoring to prioritise their reporting of bulletins monitored for important items only and guide their summarisation of material. These requests were also used to

³ Michael Herman, *Intelligence Power in Peace and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.42-43; Robert Kennedy, *Of Knowledge and Power: the complexities of national intelligence* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), pp.55; 81; 105; Arthur S. Hulnick, 'What's wrong with the Intelligence Cycle', *Intelligence and National Security* 21:6 (2006), pp.962; 967-968.

inform the selection of Flash material from all broadcasts, so that appropriate material could be sent to consumers as a matter of urgency.

Government Departments

A summary of the work of the Monitoring Service, written on 6 December 1939, provided a useful short account of the type of items Monitoring employees recorded on behalf of government departments. The Monitoring Service firstly watched out for items for the Service departments. On behalf of the Admiralty, they recorded any information about shipping movements, mine warnings, reported shipping losses, and any enemy propaganda relating to naval warfare. For the Air Ministry, they recorded air raid warnings from neutral countries, reports of Allied air raids over enemy territory, reports of allied losses and broadcast lists of casualties. MI5 wanted enemy broadcasts intended for listeners in Britain to be recorded, especially those likely to impair allied morale. MI9, a semi-secret branch of the Military Intelligence directorate of the War Office, concerned with helping prisoners escape, wanted monitored material for the purposes of preparing counter-propaganda in enemy countries. The MoI was stated as being most interested in monitored material from the view of counter-propaganda in neutral, allied and home countries. The Foreign Office News Department and Political Intelligence Department were interested in all news and propaganda broadcast by enemy and neutral countries, and the Intelligence division of MEW was interested in broadcasts indicating the economic condition of enemy or pro-enemy countries. They were also interested in talks on the German home programme and reports indicating neutral reaction to the Allied blockade. The India Office, Colonial Office and Dominions Office were all interested in broadcasts directed by the enemy towards their relevant regions, or any broadcasts relative to their colonial administration, or Dominion participation in the war, respectively.⁴

These early established collection priorities adapted as the war progressed, and consumers became more aware of the potentialities of BBCM reporting. In early

⁴ Note BBC Monitoring Service, 6 Dec. 1939, BBC:WAC R34/476.

November 1939, HQ Bomber Command contacted the Monitoring Service to state they were interested in interruptions of German programmes, and requested that any news received from German stations, which appeared to be of interest to the RAF, be transmitted to them directly by telephone, as information passed through the Air Ministry often arrived too late to be of use.⁵ MI9 also sent further requests to the Monitoring Service in January 1940. They asked the Service to pay special attention to information broadcast on British POWs or on internal conditions in Germany, including rail travel regulations, permit or identity card regulations, black-out movement regulations, special regulations regarding movement near to frontiers, and regulations regarding the purchase of food and clothing. It was decided this information could be included in the Daily Digest.⁶ Also in January 1940, the Admiralty stressed the importance to them of gale warnings and other important weather reports from countries around the North Sea. Shankland, of BBC Overseas Intelligence, wrote to Marriott, then Head of Reception, that he thought only one broadcast, Belgium, was likely to contain such a report. He requested Wood Norton to monitor the transmission and also asked that monitors and supervisors be told to send such reports to Information Bureau as quickly as possible.⁷ Later that year, Major Wakeham visited the Admiralty and reported his findings, as to their use of BBC monitored material, to senior members of BBCM, so as to help them better direct their service to this user's needs. The Flash service had an apparently wide distribution within the Admiralty, with weather reports being sent to 12 sections, naval warfare items and mine warnings to 11 sections, and navigational warnings to eight sections. In addition, all such items were sometimes passed on to individual specialists, the First Lord or other high officers.⁸

As demonstrated by Major Wakeham's visit to the Admiralty, the Monitoring Service did not merely passively wait to receive consumer demands, but realised the importance of a dialogue with consumers. On 11 December, the BBC sent a request to Hugh Gaitskell at MEW, asking him to provide details of the use to

⁵ Memo Newton to Shankland (OID), 9 Nov. 1939, BBC:WAC E2/407/1.

⁶ Memo EV to Harding, 19 Jan. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/411.

⁷ Memo Shankland to Marriott, 22 Jan 1940, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

⁸ Memo Wakeham to Baker, all supervisors, DDOI & Whitely, 5 Apr. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/407/1.

which the Daily Digest was put within his department, for instance, if they prepared an analysis on it, which could be forwarded. This, the BBC stated, might make it possible to provide them with a better service of raw material. BBC Monitoring stated that there was, for instance, sometimes further economic information contained in items such as agricultural bulletins and talks for housewives, to which they found it difficult to give priority owing to the urgency of other kinds of material. If, however, they knew the department's needs, then they could no doubt arrange to keep a special watch.⁹ In January 1940, the Monitoring Service contacted the MEW again to query whether it was still necessary to monitor German agricultural bulletins, begun following a request from the Ministry of Agriculture to do so. The BBC were concerned that the bulletins were usually of a highly technical nature, which meant they took up a large proportion of the time of the most skilled monitors.¹⁰ The Head of the Intelligence Section of the MEW replied in January 1940 to assure the Monitoring Service that the material being sent to them was very valuable, and stressed that the value of this material often lay in certain details, which were not immediately obvious.¹¹

BBC

The BBC news and programme departments also requested BBC Monitoring to record particular types of information from broadcasts. In 1941, the European programmes department requested that monitors be asked to look out for propaganda and religious points, as well as for news. This was because: '[s]ome members...feel that at the moment the broadcasts are being listened to more from a news angle than from any other.'¹²

Items that were referred to in the Digest but not regularly monitored, such as songs, were also sometimes picked up on as potentially useful material by BBC users. The Eastern Services organiser wrote to Monitoring in July 1943 to express his interest in certain Hindustani songs, reported to have been broadcast

⁹ Letter JAK to Gaitskell, 11. Sep.1939, BBC:WAC E2/407/2.

¹⁰ Memo A.B. Elkin to Salt, 19 Jan. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/414.

¹¹ Memo Salt to Elkin, 22 Jan. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/414.

¹² Memo Tudor- Jones (Eur PD) to DMS, 17 May 1941 BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

on 23 and 25 June, and requested that these musical broadcasts be recorded in future if they continued. He stated that he would probably not require more than a few days worth of these, but was anxious to have the maximum current material available at that moment, because he had reason to believe that there had lately been a radical change of policy in these transmissions.¹³ The following month he also requested sample recordings of broadcasts in the Japanese language from Berlin and Tokyo, 'with a view to studying the type of language and the broadcasting techniques employed.'¹⁴

Monitoring of a number of American broadcasts also originated from a BBC request. On 11 January 1940, Salt wrote to Marriott that he had heard some interesting material had been obtained from transmissions from WBNI in Spanish (WBNI was controlled by American broadcaster NBC), and suggested temporary monitoring of the service.¹⁵ Salt later clarified that this monitoring had been requested, because he had received reports stating that these WNBI bulletins were decidedly pro-German in sentiment. Salt stated that he wanted to check the veracity of the reports and that it was this aim that should guide the monitoring of the transmissions.¹⁶ Marriott agreed, in view of Salt's interest, to cover this material more regularly in future.¹⁷

Station Coverage

The Monitoring Service received a number of requests from consumers asking for reports to be made of particular sets of transmissions. The remaining documentation in relation to this matter, however, does not fully account for the Monitoring Service's radio coverage. This may be because other requests were received by telephone or on an informal basis, or correspondence has been lost. It seems likely, however, that the Service, whilst accommodating and adapting their coverage to specific requests, also determined coverage according to their

¹³ Memo C. Lawson-Reece (Eastern Services) to ADMS, 3 July 1943, BBC:WAC E2/408/1.

¹⁴ Memo Lawson-Reece to Elford (Overseas Liaison), 9 Aug. 1943, BBC:WAC E1/1031.

¹⁵ Memo Salt to Marriott, 11 Jan. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

¹⁶ Memo Salt to Marriott, 17 Jan. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

¹⁷ Memo Marriott to Salt, 13 Jan. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

own judgement as to the most valuable transmissions for consumers. A memo from the Director of the Monitoring Service in August 1942 supports this view:

The Monitoring Service has been in existence almost exactly three years. It has taken this length of time for the Service to become widely known and for the consumers of our material to realise its possibilities.¹⁸

The Service consequently appears to have largely determined its own coverage for the first few years of the war, in consultation with the MoI, and it was only a couple of years later that other consumers began to take a more active role in shaping station coverage to their requirements. Thus, before outlining the consumer requests for coverage of particular transmissions, received by BBC Monitoring, this section will begin by outlining the schedule of station and language coverage that was adopted during the early part of the war.

Basic Coverage

Those languages monitored prior to the formal institution of the Monitoring Service - both by the BBC foreign language services and by the RIIA - formed the initial basis for selecting which countries' and stations' output was monitored. The first broadcasts covered by the BBC Monitoring Service were German transmissions in English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic and Polish. These had been exactly the languages covered collectively by the pre-war monitoring enterprises, with the additional coverage of broadcasts in Polish. Of the other countries' broadcasting monitored, transmissions from Italy, France, Belgium, Spain, the USSR and the USA were all covered to varying degrees by the time Britain declared war on 3 September. Over the following months, The Monitoring Service proceeded to drastically expand both their country and language coverage. By the end of September coverage had been extended to German broadcasts in Dutch (7th) and Italian (20th), as well as broadcasts emanating from Eire (7th), Yugoslavia (8th), Hungary (9th), Portugal

¹⁸ Memo DMS to C(OS), 20 Aug. 1942, BBC:WAC R13/169/6.

(12th), the Netherlands (13th), Japan (22nd), China (24th), Switzerland (23rd), and Central and South America (27th).¹⁹

The institution of monitoring from Japan, China and Central and South America near the end of the month partly reflects a decision taken on 22 September 1939. At a meeting of the Joint Planning and Broadcasting Committees extra expenditure was approved to extend the Monitoring Service to: 'embrace the whole world'.²⁰ By the end of the year, German broadcasts in Hungarian, Rumanian and Czech were being covered, as well as those emanating from Turkey, Rumania and Finland. The following year truly witnessed the expansion of BBCM to cover the entire world. Coverage of German transmissions was extended to those broadcast in Bulgarian, Danish, Norwegian, Finnish, Swedish, Afrikaans, Flemish, Gaelic, Hindustani and Persian. Transmissions from the Vatican, Sweden, Australia, Norway, Denmark, Albania, the Dutch East Indies (present-day Indonesia), Greece and the Near East were also initiated in 1940. Few languages or countries' transmissions covered by the wartime Service were started after 1940. Coverage of German transmissions in Russian, however, was not begun until January 1942, and broadcasts from India were not monitored until June 1941. Transmissions from Bulgaria were also not started until September 1944.²¹ This is not to say the Service did not expand or alter significantly after 1940, but it was the number of transmissions in particular languages and from particular nations, that increased. Monitoring of particular types of transmissions were also occasionally started and then dropped later on, if reception became too poor, or the material was found to be repetitive. This was the case with Polish broadcasts from Italy, which were dropped in late October 1939 after they were found to be the same in content as Italian transmissions to France.²²

The broadcast output of certain countries was so vast that decisions over its coverage were particularly difficult. German broadcasting was a priority and the resources involved to maintain extensive coverage of all transmissions was

¹⁹ IWM: BBC MST collection.

²⁰ Meeting JPBC, 21 Sep. 1939, TNA FO 898/7.

²¹ IWM: BBC MST collection.

²² Memo Marriott to Salt, 31 Oct. 1939, BBC:WAC E2/408/1.

considered worthwhile, but there were limited resources for other countries' output, as explained in a memo by Richard Marriott:

I must point out here that there is all the difference in the world between keeping a general eye on what is being said by other countries, and doing a complete 24-hour coverage. The only country we do this with now is Germany, and it means that nearly half the monitors are employed on it, and more than half the total output of requests is devoted to it.²³

The broadcasting output of the USSR and the USA presented the biggest challenge within the climate of limited resources.

Soviet broadcasting was given a comparatively low priority during the earliest part of the war. In October 1939, Marriott explained, in response to a query over the monitoring of Russian home broadcasting, that Russian broadcasts in Russian had been monitored at intervals from the beginning of the war, but that the four Russian speakers currently employed by the Service were also assigned to monitor French and German transmissions, as well as Russian. Marriott further expressed the view that 'Russia's intentions and general lines of policy [were] more clearly indicated by their broadcasts in other languages', and so he felt it would be sufficient to monitor two bulletins a day in Russian.²⁴ The sheer volume and complicated state of Russian broadcasting remained a problem throughout the war, as illustrated in a memo from the Monitoring Service Executive in November 1941:

The increasing importance of broadcasts from Russia and continuous state of flux on technical side of Russian broadcasting have made it imperative that much more time is spent in finding out more information about broadcasts from USSR, increasing roving watcher etc.²⁵

In December 1942, the Director of the Monitoring Service wrote to the Joint Director-General of the BBC, Sir Cecil Graves, presumably in response to a request, enclosing a list of transmissions to be monitored from the USSR:

²³ Memo Marriott, to Clark, 1 Oct. 1939, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

²⁴ Memo Marriott to Clark, 1 Oct. 1939, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

²⁵ Memo MSeX to ADOPA (Supply), 10 Nov. 1941, BBC:WAC R13/169/5.

You will notice that only three transmissions are monitored in full, all the others being done for important items only. There is such a mass of broadcasting from Russia that this has been found the best way to do it. You will not find any French broadcasts monitored. This is partly because Russian broadcasting to France has not been found to be very important, and partly because our French coverage all round is not as comprehensive as it could be, owing to staff difficulties.²⁶

Incidentally, on the actual list, five bulletins seemed to be listed as being monitored in full, which were the 1300, 2030, 2100, 2220 and 2400 from Moscow in Russian. Two Czech, seven English, one Estonian, and two German broadcasts were monitored daily for important items only, and an additional Estonian, German, Finnish, Hindustani, Norwegian, Polish and Swedish bulletin were monitored occasionally.²⁷

American broadcasting was also a challenge, not just because of its scale but also due to the fact different broadcasting companies controlled it, which were not all under state influence. In November 1939 a BBC internal memo listed the American stations that were generally receivable by Monitoring as those associated with NBC (National Broadcasting Corporation), which included WNBI, WBCA, WBOS, WPIT, WCKO (Schenectady), WGKA (Schenectady), those owned or affiliated to CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System), which included WCBX (Wayne) and WCAB (Philadelphia), and lastly those owned by World Wide Broadcasting Corporation, WRDL and WRUW.²⁸ When the issue of the monitoring of American stations was again raised in October 1941, Marriott set out the scale of American overseas broadcasts at the time:

There are about seventy of these broadcasts a day. The languages used are English, French, German, Italian, Arabic, Greek, Turkish, Spanish, Portuguese, Serbo-Croat, Dutch, Polish, Czech and Scandinavian. To cover these fully in the way that we do other monitoring would require an extra staff of about forty people and proportionate equipment in the form of receivers, transcribers, recorders, typeprinters, accommodation etc.²⁹

²⁶ Memo Burns (DMS) to DG, 16 Dec. 1942, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

²⁷ List of bulletins monitored from USSR, 15 Dec. 1942, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

²⁸ Memo Richardson to Newton, Harding, Fry, Buschbeck, Kris & Wakeham, 7 Nov. 1939, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

²⁹ Memo DMS to C(O), DES, Fry & Whitley, 14 Oct. 1941, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

Given the expense and scale of monitoring required to, in Marriott's words, 'do the job properly', the Service decided against undertaking large-scale monitoring of American broadcasts.³⁰

Government Departments

One of the main requests that came from Monitoring consumers during the war was for increased coverage of Balkan broadcasting. In April 1942, R.H. Lockhart, of PID, wrote to Cyril Radcliffe, at the MoI, to request a hundred per cent coverage of all Balkan material available in this country.³¹ Keyser, who was the official liaison between BBC Monitoring and the Foreign Office, had already faced demands for an increase in monitoring of Balkan stations from the head of the Balkan region at PID. He responded with caution:

The fact that the monitoring of one region is being taken up in such high quarters does not seem to me entirely to make sense. It is evident that the importance of monitoring is increasing, other sources of information have disappeared and the actual amount of broadcasting from all countries is increasing, quite apart from the fact that more and more of the world is being drawn into the war. The requests for increased Balkan monitoring happens to be urgent just at the moment, but I see no reason why, in a few month's time, the same urgent demand will not come from, say, the Scandinavia group or Spain, or a number of other places... [T]he present Balkan demand would mean enormously increased staff, accommodation, equipment and so on involving very considerable sums of money. It may be this is the right thing to do, but I think that when we get this request we should at any rate consider it from the point of view of the whole of monitoring and not just the Balkans.³²

The BBC nevertheless conducted various technical experiments in order to improve reception of such signals. Later that month, a new Beverage aerial directed on the Balkans was erected. As a result they managed to get improved nighttime reception of Zagreb, Skopje and Sofia, which was difficult as each of these stations shared a wavelength with another. There was still, however, no question of being able to receive these stations in the daytime.³³ Reception was

³⁰ Memo Marriott to AC(O) & DES, 8 Oct. 1941, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

³¹ Letter R. H. Lockhart to Cyril Radcliffe, 10 Apr. 1942, BBC:WAC E2/407/2.

³² Memo DMS to C(OS), 8 Apr. 1942, BBC:WAC E2/408/1.

³³ Memo Hayes to C(E), 22 Apr. 1942, BBC:WAC E2/408/1.

still not considered sufficient and the following month, the Controller of Overseas Services, J.B. Clark, wrote back to the Director of BBC Monitoring and Hayes, of BBC Engineering, asking for advice regarding a PWE request for better Balkan reception. Clark was also concerned at a proposal for moving Balkan monitoring to the Caversham/Crowsley site immediately, as it may, by giving undue precedence to Balkan monitoring, endanger the long-term plans for the relocation of BBC Monitoring and for the unification of all monitoring on the site. He was, however, also concerned that unless the Monitoring Service attempted to meet the requirements of PWE, then it would encourage them to develop their own rival monitoring services.³⁴ Hayes replied, evidently with slight exasperation, that 'However strongly PWE may press, it will not make any difference to the reception of Balkan broadcasts in this country'. He further stated that he did not expect reception conditions to be vastly improved at Crowsley.³⁵

In June 1943, PWE and the MoI also requested an extension of the BBC's coverage of Russian broadcasts in foreign languages. The MoI stated that both the production of a joint survey of propaganda, conducted jointly with PWE, and their own propaganda intelligence work, could not be properly done without adequate evidence, which could only be obtained through BBC Monitoring. It was further stated that they were not so much interested in hot news, as in adequate reports on the treatment of news by the Russians, in other words their attempts to frame it from a propaganda point of view. The treatment of British news items in these broadcasts was also considered important, which would require fuller monitoring coverage than the headlining of broadcast items.³⁶ The Monitoring Service's response was that it was unlikely that another Russian monitor could be found, and that the coverage suggested was unlikely to help the MoI or PWE in their task:

Moscow's policy with foreign news items in news bulletins has always been to present agency reports without comment. In our view the only indication of Moscow's attitude towards foreign news in news bulletins is

³⁴ Memo C(OS) to Hayes, 16 May 1942, BBC:WAC E2/408/1.

³⁵ Memo Hayes to C(OS), 22 May 1942, BBC:WAC E2/408/1.

³⁶ Letter Kenneth Grubb (MoI) to R. Foot (BBC), 2 June 1943, BBC:WAC R13/169/7.

in the selection and arrangement of items in the bulletin. Comment on foreign news is almost entirely confined to talks, which are all monitored and treated fully on their merits. We keep for the Soviet Relations Branch, MoI, a daily log of British news items broadcast from Moscow in these bulletins.³⁷

Requests were also received from the British Embassy in Bagdad, who made use of the BBC Digest for the purpose of countering enemy propaganda. They requested the production of a Digest of all transmissions in Arabic to the Middle East and also expressed an interest in Russian transmissions, which were stated as starting to come into the picture there. The Monitoring Service, however, did not alter their collection priorities as a result, and instead merely stated that the Digest contained all currently monitored reports in Arabic, which covered Italian and German output but not Russian or Turkish.³⁸

BBC

The BBC news desks also played an important role in shaping the collection priorities of Monitoring. As early as November 1939, the BBC Arabic editor commented that he was perturbed at the fact that Germany was broadcasting daily in both Greek and Turkish, and yet there were no monitoring arrangements to cover these transmissions. 'For all we know,' he stated, 'Germany may nightly be refuting news in our own bulletins in these languages.' He requested that these two languages be included in any future plans to extend the scope of BBC Monitoring, and also offered that Greek and Turkish news staff would be willing to undertake additional monitoring work in their leisure time, if the BBC could provide the facilities.³⁹

The Monitoring Service also actively sought to check BBC requirements, as in February 1940, when Marriott wrote to the Director of Overseas Intelligence at the BBC, John Salt, to ask about their coverage of Radio Vatican:

³⁷ Memo Lampson to DMS, 9 June 1943, BBC:WAC R13/169/7.

³⁸ Letter British Embassy Bagdad to Information Bureau, 20 Jan. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/407/1.

³⁹ Memo Arabic editor to ONE, 28 Nov. 1939, BBC:WAC E2/408/1.

For some time past we have been monitoring it pretty extensively in several languages, and I should like to know whether it is considered of permanent interest or whether it was merely a particular interest at the moment when we were first asked to monitor it regularly. There is no particular difficulty about doing it; it is simply that I should like to know where it ranks in importance. It is convenient to have a kind of mental order, so that one knows which bulletins should be given preference, and which sacrificed when necessary. It might be that one bulletin a day was thought to be enough, or that certain languages from the Vatican should be given weekly, and so on.⁴⁰

Salt replied that they were still important and should be given considerable priority, as they were the only definite anti-German transmissions from a non-belligerent country, and thus likely to attract a considerable reaction abroad, which could only be judged in the light of the original.⁴¹ Later in the war, the European programme department requested additional monitoring of Vatican radio. Marriott replied to the request that they were already officially covering a considerable amount of these broadcasts, but he nevertheless admitted that the Digest coverage did not seem to reflect the original monitoring instructions.⁴² The Monitoring Service editorial department agreed that the Digest reports of Vatican broadcasts did not convey the full picture. The reason, they explained, was that they did not have the staff or space to increase the size of the Digest at present, and if they had, 'in order to preserve a balance between all our users', they would have to increase the size of other sections, as well as that dealing with the Vatican. Editors had been asked to deal leniently with Vatican broadcasts, because of the special interest in them, but he stated that if the special interest ceased, he should feel obliged, out of consideration for other Digest users, to stop the preferential treatment.⁴³ When Marriott forwarded this answer to the European programme department, they replied that they understood the limitations and stated that monitoring for important items only would be sufficient.⁴⁴ By May 1941, the Vatican had announced they were curtailing many of their broadcasts anyway, which also coincided with a change in the character of these broadcasts, so that they became devoid of any items that could

⁴⁰ Memo Marriott to Salt, 11 Feb. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

⁴¹ Memo Salt to Marriott, 14 Feb. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

⁴² Memo DMS to Eur. PD, 11 Apr. 1941, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

⁴³ Memo Baker to DMS, 7 May 1941, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

⁴⁴ Memo Tudor- Jones to DMS, 17 May 1941, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

offend the Axis. At this point, the Monitoring Service therefore took the decision to reduce monitoring of these broadcasts considerably.⁴⁵

This correspondence with consumers, points to the balancing of requirements and resources conducted by the Service, so as to best meet the largest proportion of requests, whilst prioritising those transmissions deemed to have most, or widest, importance by consumers. It also illustrated the strong influence of the Monitoring Service's own knowledge and judgement as to the value of certain transmissions.

In August 1941, a Mr Winch, of Polish News, complained to BBC Monitoring that he was not getting enough material to help produce broadcasts for Poland. He only received the monitoring of one Moscow service in Polish, that at 20.30, which he felt was the least important service. He also mentioned that he no longer received WHUL (USA) Polish.⁴⁶ The Monitoring Service replied that it would not be possible to monitor a second Moscow Polish broadcast, as they only had two monitors who could manage Polish, and these monitors were also responsible for monitoring some French transmissions. It was considered unjustifiable to sacrifice any French monitoring, at that time, in favour of Polish.⁴⁷ The following month, however, Monitoring was able to confirm that they should be able to do more in Polish from then on.⁴⁸ Winch, however, remained unsatisfied with the service and wrote on 1 October to complain that, although sympathetic, the Service had never managed to put Polish monitoring on a satisfactory basis for more than a fortnight, and further highlighted the importance of Monitoring for his work:

Without a proper monitoring service, we are working completely in the dark. Also we cannot answer the general lines of German propaganda directed to the Poles, nor can we see the line which the Russians are taking up. Moreover, we are often in difficulty over specific items of news.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Memo Keyser to Eur. PD, 23 May 1941, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

⁴⁶ Memo Winch to Keyser, 20 Aug. 1942, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

⁴⁷ Memo Keyser to Winch, 28 Aug. 1941, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

⁴⁸ Memo Keyser to Winch, 10 Sep. 1941, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

⁴⁹ Memo Winch to Newsome, 1 Oct. 1941, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

Winch remained unhappy, but there were also a number of reception difficulties that prevented the Monitoring Service from fulfilling his requests. In reply to a complaint of Winch's that other stations were being covered with greater frequency, BBC Monitoring laid out their position:

Your last point about there being so much more from Hungary than in Polish is one which I hoped I had made clear to you on more than one previous occasion. It is that through circumstances which are beyond our control we can hear Budapest very clearly and a large number of interesting non-repetitive items are broadcast from that station, whereas we have great difficulty in hearing Weichsel which is a station which normally produces little of interest.⁵⁰

Technical considerations also prevented BBC Monitoring from complying with a request from the Overseas Intelligence department, received in May 1940, to monitor a Greek station, found after investigation to be Salonica on a wavelength of 376m. Unfortunately it was found that the transmission was not generally receivable at Wood Norton, because it coincided with Britain's own 'For the Forces' programme.⁵¹

The Monitoring Service was, however, willing to make changes to coverage if these could be accommodated, were deemed worthwhile and did not adversely affect other consumers. In October 1941, BBC Monitoring wrote to the Latin-American programme organiser to state that given the importance of Latin American sources, as expressed by him, it had been arranged to treat these, in future, much more extensively in the Daily Digest.⁵² This willingness to compromise, within limitations, was also demonstrated by a series of correspondence between Keyser, of the Information Bureau, and the BBC Scandinavian News sections. Keyser had requested to attend a Scandinavian Service meeting in August 1941 and reported back to Monitoring on the requests that had been made to him at the meeting. After consultation, Keyser informed the Scandinavian Service that they were arranging to monitor Königsberg in Swedish at 1745, and to sacrifice for this purpose Motala at 1900. He felt, however, that they would miss out on some important talks and items by

⁵⁰ Memo Keyser to Winch, 20 Nov. 1941, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

⁵¹ Memo Research Unit, WN to OI, 9 May 1940, BBC:WAC E2/408/1.

⁵² Memo Keyser to J.A. Camacho (LAPO), 25 Oct. 1941, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

proceeding with this request.⁵³ The Scandinavian news section replied that it would probably be enough to sample the Konigsberg transmissions in Swedish at 17.45 and agreed that it might not be desirable to sacrifice Motala on a permanent basis.⁵⁴ Other station changes were also suggested, and Scandinavian News expressed their gratitude at the Monitoring Service's attempt to accommodate their demands:

I should like to say that we very much appreciate your willingness to experiment and to make temporary changes which must add considerably to your labours and those of the monitors.⁵⁵

This incident particularly demonstrated, as far as pure station coverage was concerned, the importance of contact and discussion between the Service and its consumers. On this occasion, Keyser queried the substitutions in coverage requested by the Scandinavian Services:

[W]e have reason to believe that the Bremen Danish and Konigsberg Swedish which we are undertaking at your request are by any known standards repetitive, and duller than the broadcasts which they are replacing. Could you therefore be so kind as to make a special point of letting me know, say [in] ten days or so, whether you really wish us to continue with this new arrangement.⁵⁶

Scandinavian news replied that, although they was quite prepared to believe that Bremen in Danish and Konigsberg in Swedish were less interesting than the broadcasts presently monitored, that these transmissions were their direct competitors and it was therefore interesting to know what they contained. For example, they stated, they had found in the past that the Finnish Service from Konigsberg was sometimes an exact copy in content and layout of their own Finnish transmissions, a discovery that would not have been made except by listening to Konigsberg for a few days.⁵⁷ Although the Monitoring Service could make intelligent judgements as to what sort of material would be most useful to

⁵³ Memo Keyser to Kinks (Scandinavian News), 21 Aug. 1941, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

⁵⁴ Memo Kinks to Keyser, 22 Aug. 1941, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Memo Keyser to Kinks, 21 Aug. 1941, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

⁵⁷ Memo Kinks to Keyser, 22 Aug. 1941, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

consumers, they could not help them in their task to the fullest possible extent, without being informed of all the uses to which monitored material was put.

The issue of Scandinavian monitoring also illustrates the tight schedule on which monitoring was organised and how even small changes to the schedule were difficult to accommodate. This was also made clear by the Monitoring Service's strong response to an informal attempt by a member of the BBC Spanish programme section, also located at Wood Norton, to get a Spanish monitor to report some particular transmissions in their language of origin. If the monitor had complied with this request, it would have caused them to deviate from the official monitoring schedule. Once learning of the incident, Whitely, as Head of Reception, promptly sent a warning to the programmes editor and senior Monitoring staff:

[S]uch requests from outside the Monitoring Service must go through the Wood Norton Information Bureau (telephone extension 299), and I should like to take this opportunity of emphasising that this simple routine must be followed.⁵⁸

Other Governments

The BBC Monitoring Service was created to serve the needs of British Government departments and the Home and Overseas departments of the BBC. As illustrated in the last chapter, however, both the United States' monitoring service and the exiled European Governments stationed in Britain also received BBCM material during the war. These other Governments occasionally sought to alter, or increase, the BBC's original broadcast coverage to suit their own requirements.

On 19 September 1940, Marriott wrote to Whitley of the Reception department and Major Wakeham of the Information Bureau, to pass on a request by the Czechoslovak Government. They were preparing a special news commentary for broadcast each day and were anxious to receive the fullest possible Czech monitoring. They had apparently tried running their own small monitoring

⁵⁸ Memo Whitley to Marks, Copy to DMS, 5 May 1941, BBC:WAC E2/408/2.

service, which had proved unsuccessful, and wanted BBC Monitoring's cooperation. It was decided that the most satisfactory solution would be for the Government to provide the Monitoring Service with a list of requirements for the use of their Czech monitors, Flash supervisors and Information Bureau, together with a point of reference as to which important information should be communicated immediately. Unfortunately no evidence of this list remains.⁵⁹

The United States sent the most far-reaching demands for additional broadcasting coverage. The easier access that BBC Monitoring had to European transmissions meant that FCC and OWI were not content to only select from material monitored by the BBC. A memo from the Director of the Monitoring Service in October 1942 attests to the readiness with which the American consumers supplied their collection requirements:

We do find that both the F.C.C. and O.W.I. people have a habit of putting their requests to everyone to whom they have introductions. Goodwin Watson had been with Rhodes first to Sir Cecil Graves, then to Wakeham, then to myself and then to you. Some of the requests he made to you were made to all four people.⁶⁰

In October 1942, the FCC requested increased coverage of short and medium wave broadcasts from German-occupied Russia, such as Kiev, and the special service to Latvian forces. They also wanted increased Hellschreiber material, and advocated an increase in the number of Hellschreiber machines, as they were 'worried by the incompleteness of present coverage.'⁶¹

Robert Burns, Director of BBC Monitoring, replied to this last request by making a point which seemed to remain an issue between the two monitoring enterprises throughout the war, and was not settled until the post-war monitoring agreement between the two nations:

[W]hereas they [the Americans] started by extracting what they wanted from the material we can place at their disposal, they tend now to ask us

⁵⁹ Memo Marriott to Whitely & Wakeham, 19 Sep. 1940, BBC:WAC R13/169/3.

⁶⁰ Memo DMS to C(OS), 27 Oct. 1942, BBC:WAC E2/408/1.

⁶¹ Memo C(OS) to DMS, 26 Oct. 1942, BBC:WAC E2/408/1.

to do things specially for them which are liable to interfere with our general service to our consumers.⁶²

The reluctance to comply with American requests for an increased volume of material was also founded on a difference of opinion as to how valuable the extra material would be. This was particularly the case with regard to the perceived value of the method of quantitative analysis within the two countries. Whereas Britain seemed to decide that there was little value in the method and dropped it mid-war, the technique continued to be developed in the United States. Due to the quantitative method of analysis employed by the FCC, they frequently required a larger and more detailed number of reports of broadcasts than BBC Monitoring produced for their own purposes. In response to a request for extra material in late October 1942, Burns stated:

The Americans are here trying to do something which we do not do, and which does not easily fit into our scheme of things. Goodwin Watson wants to do statistical work which involves taking a great many more transmissions than we normally do. We of course work on a selective basis; he wants to work on a wholesale basis, taking a large number of transmissions which we should consider repetitive or uninteresting.⁶³

Burns' concerns stemmed from the fact the Monitoring Service had only limited resources. He did not want to damage the service provided to consumers in Britain by helping the Americans to conduct research using a method which the BBC did not, by then, consider valuable, or at least not valuable enough to devote so much time and resources to:

It is our opinion, which could not be given to them, that all this statistical work is very likely only to yield results which our consumers arrive at from a study of the selected material and may well be just so much waste of time.⁶⁴

Clark replied that although he agreed with Burn's general conclusions, he was anxious not to encourage the FCC to look elsewhere for material, and with regard to the last point stated that he knew the BBC was considering the

⁶² Memo DMS to C(OS), 27 Oct. 1942, BBC:WAC E2/408/1.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Memo DMS to C(OS), 27 Oct. 1942, BBC:WAC E2/408/1.

installation of extra Hellschreiber machines, which he felt might forestall independent action on the FCC's part. He did, however, note that 'if they do want to involve themselves in an unnecessary volume of material, I agree that they might well be encouraged to work on their own.'⁶⁵

Both during and after the war, the BBC frequently complied with American requests to produce more and fuller transcripts of broadcast items.⁶⁶ However, the Monitoring Service continued, in its basic policy to work on a selective basis in its collection, as their consumers continued to analyse primarily by selective, qualitative methods. The issue of summarisation of broadcasts also recurred during the immediate post-war period, when the BBC sought to make economies by covering more broadcasts in summary, rather than producing full translations.⁶⁷

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the large number of countries' transmissions and broadcast languages covered by BBC Monitoring, as well as pointing to the large number of different consumers that they had to satisfy when choosing which transmissions to monitor, and how fully to report them. It has further demonstrated that Government and BBC requests were not sufficient in themselves to develop a monitoring schedule of transmissions from scratch at the beginning of the war. The expertise of Monitoring staff also played their part. Monitoring employees had to anticipate what transmissions would be most likely to provide useful content to their known consumers, whilst also looking out for any new, unforeseen uses of monitored material. Technical, economic and staff constraints also intervened in the Service's attempt to meet consumer requirements.

It was not, however, only technical difficulties in reception or the ability to find capable monitors to cover the languages required, which made determining

⁶⁵ Memo C(OS) to DMS, 29 Oct. 1942, BBC:WAC E2/408/1.

⁶⁶ Interview with Karl Lehmann.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

broadcast coverage a difficult task. The Monitoring Service had limited resources, however it could and did expand throughout the war to meet consumer demands for increased coverage, eventually moving premises in 1943. The difficulty was more in prioritising transmissions, and in making judgements as to whether the extra coverage demanded by consumers was worth the extra expense and manpower at a time of national emergency.

An important factor to emerge from this chapter was the importance of sharing between BBC Monitoring and their consumers, as to the content and potential value of broadcasts on the one hand, and the requirements and use to which monitored material was put on the other. Without this dialogue, the Monitoring Service could not, in many of these cases, have adequately prioritised which transmissions to monitor, or have chosen the most valuable information to report from the transmissions they did monitor. This issue will be explored in more depth, at particular points during the war, in the case study chapters. Security concerns, which limited information sharing, may have made it impossible for the Government to have been any more explicit about their work or the information they required. The Monitoring Service may also have received requests from the Government or BBC, for which no record remains. The implications of security in sharing collection requirements will be explored further in the following chapter, which is devoted to an examination of the work of monitors. The Government and BBC requests, referred to in this chapter, were addressed to senior Monitoring staff or to the Information Bureau and editorial sections, not to the reception department. In the light of this chapter's findings - that information sharing improved the value of the Monitoring Service's work - it is important to consider whether information about requirements was passed on to monitors, the initial selectors and summarisers of information.

Chapter 4

The Monitoring Process

One of the most remarkable things about the BBC Monitoring Service, noted former monitor Karl Lehmann, was that the monitor's task was an entirely new one.¹ There had been a few pre-war experiments in monitoring, but only on a temporary basis and then only on a small scale. At the outbreak of war, the Monitoring Service therefore faced the task of developing standards and best practice for a new profession. The majority of those employed at BBC Monitoring at the beginning of the war had no experience of radio monitoring, and there was little detailed understanding, on the part of those who established the organisation, as to its future role in the prosecution of the war. The previous professional experiences and assumptions, which monitors brought to their task, thus played an important role in defining the assumptions and values of the Service itself, as monitors encountered and sought to overcome the practical difficulties and complexities that broadcast monitoring presented.

This chapter thus firstly draws on former monitors' reflections and perceptions of their own work to consider the different ways in which they approached and defined their newly assigned task. It then proceeds to look in more detail at how these individual values and assumptions influenced three particular aspects of the monitoring process: listening, translation and selection. Examples drawn from the Imperial War Museum's collection of monitor's transcripts, and Daily Digests, will further illustrate individual employees' approach to their new occupation and the difficulties they encountered. Monitors, however, did not work in isolation. This chapter therefore also considers how wartime concerns for security, and contemporary official beliefs regarding management and hierarchy, influenced the development of Monitoring's operational procedures.

¹ Interview with Karl Lehmann.

Professional Identity

As David Hallett warned at the outset of the RIIA monitoring experiment in May 1939, listening, selection and analysis were all interconnected parts of the same process:

I am convinced that the work will disintegrate if an attempt is made to run it in sections and compartments. One process flows into the other and compactness will ensure the greatest likelihood of success.²

The huge amount of material flowing over the airwaves led to the understandable decision to establish separate input and output departments for the BBC Monitoring Service, originally based at Wood Norton and London respectively. As Hallett predicted, this designation of the editing task to those divorced from listening did cause a degree of conflict within the wartime Service.³ The solutions attempted by the Monitoring Service to, as it were, bridge the gap between input and output, led on occasion to even more conflict. It was primarily these points of conflict, which elicited the most reflection and articulation from monitors about their work, as they sought to defend and define their role and expertise, often in comparison or contradistinction to those in editorial.

Four separate professional identities either adopted, or alluded to, by wartime monitors, can be discerned from the remaining documentation and monitors' testimony: academic, intelligence, journalistic and archival.

Academic

The first identity stemmed from the fact many monitors had a university background. The allusion to monitors as academics first arose over a conflict with the editorial department about their treatment of monitors' transcripts. Monitors regarded themselves as the experts on the broadcasts to which they listened, for as translators they recognised the importance of what Ernst

² Memo on Premises, David Hallett, 24 May 1939, Chatham House 9/39b.

³ Account of analysis of broadcasts, 19 July 1939, Chatham House 9/39a.

Gombrich termed 'nuance'. During this period translation was officially viewed as a mechanical process, which could be entirely divorced from analysis or consideration of consumer requirements. This was confirmed by the organisational structure of BBC Monitoring, which gave full official responsibility for monitored output to the editorial and News Bureau sections, and from July 1940 also appointed News Bureau supervisors, often with no language qualifications, to the listening rooms to tell monitors how to report the material they listened to. In limited cases - such as a report that individual X had died or become Prime Minister, or visited Spain - a translation that merely conveyed the essential facts that had been broadcast was sufficient. BBC Monitoring was not, however, assigned to only report facts conveyed in broadcasts, for which translation in the true sense of the word was not required. Monitoring, as Gombrich stated, also 'reports on broadcasts, on propaganda, on the manufacture of emotions'. Hence, '[monitors] must know what response certain words are likely to evoke and... must try to find equivalent words with roughly equivalent response.'⁴ In such cases choice of words and phrasing were of paramount importance and finding such words took time. Monitors therefore objected when editors altered their careful wording for the Digest report of the item, or when editors expressed despair at the time monitors took over their translations.

The monitors' argument here was essentially the argument of a translator. Translators, however, rarely possessed a recognised professional identity during this period and did not until the 1950s, a fact marked by the foundation in 1953 of the International Federation of Translators in Paris.⁵ Given this lack of a professional identity for translators, monitors fell back on their previous academic experience to defend their viewpoint.

Describing the wartime disputes between monitors and editors, Gombrich classified the conflict as one between the 'academic' monitors, who were often joined in their view by the report writers, and the 'journalists', represented in

⁴ Ernst Gombrich, "'Swansongs' from 1945", *Umění*, XLVI (1998), p.468.

⁵ Jeremy Mundy, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications* 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008), pp.5-7.

editorial. The classification of editors as ‘journalists’ by Gombrich was primarily negative and oppositional. Not only did the journalists not appreciate the ‘academics’ care for detail in their work, he complained, but they also had a very different perspective of what information was important to report. ‘News sense’ within journalism, Gombrich argued, was a matter of instinct, primarily involving mass observation and mass psychology, and ultimately what will make people part with their money to buy a newspaper. He admitted that ‘news sense’ applied to the work of the Service to some degree, in relation to their work for the BBC news departments, but not to the majority of it.⁶ Lux Furtmüller, another former wartime monitor, expressed his partial support for this view, when he stated that a good editor ‘knows that the Digest is a documentary rather than a journalistic publication, and that broadcast texts cannot be edited with the latitude usual in ordinary journalistic practice.’⁷

Intelligence

Gombrich also made a contrast between ‘news sense’ and ‘intelligence’, for he stated that the Monitoring Service was also in the intelligence business. Intelligence, Gombrich asserted, was a far more complex matter than ‘news sense’. Comparing broadcast material to a heap of iron filings, he stated that it was amorphous in itself. In other words, there was no such thing as an objective standard of importance. It was only the magnet of a specific question that made the material fall into a definite pattern, or order of importance, in which one thing became more important than another.⁸ Furtmüller again repeated the same view, although differently phrased: ‘For it is not the material which is intrinsically more or less interesting, but we who are more or less interested.’⁹ The allusion to intelligence was made because the questions referred to, must come from, or be asked on behalf of, consumers, if the Monitoring Service was to provide a useful service.¹⁰

⁶ Gombrich, ‘Swansongs’, p.465-6.

⁷ L. E. Furtmüller, ‘Some aspects of the Technology of Monitoring’, Jan. 1947, BBC:WAC E8/209/3.

⁸ Gombrich, ‘Swansongs’, pp.466-7.

⁹ L. E. Furtmüller, ‘Technology of Monitoring’, Jan. 1947, BBC:WAC E8/209/3.

¹⁰ Gombrich, ‘Swansongs’, pp.466-7.

A number of other comments made by monitors hint at a position remarkably similar to that of an intelligence professional, particularly the foreign agent. Monitors were forced by their duties of constant listening to enemy broadcasting - conducted so they could convey the broadcaster's message to consumers - into an intermediate position between two languages, and often two value sets. A monitor, writing on this matter in the immediate post-war period, cautioned against drawing false analogies between monitoring and overseas broadcasting, just because the two were organisationally grouped together:

Foreign Broadcasting staff interpret Britain to their native countries in the medium of their native languages. To the extent that they become anglicised, they become "stale" as broadcasters. Monitors interpret foreign countries not to the ordinary British listener, but as specialists to a specialised British audience. They cannot do their job properly, unless they are to a certain extent anglicised: they must be thoroughly at home in the English language, in English culture and English thought.¹¹

Several internal BBC wartime documents noted the fact that the Monitoring Service was responsible for the collection of 'intelligence', and frequently distinguished this from the collection of 'news' and 'propaganda'.¹² Largely because of the association of the term intelligence with secrecy, monitors did not however explicitly identify themselves as having being employed in intelligence. Even Gombrich himself, in an interview conducted in 1999, denied that he had worked in intelligence during the war, declaring that the broadcasts were open and anyone could have listened to them.¹³ Moreover, having never been employed in intelligence, monitors did not have this identification or value set to draw on when defining their new role and identity.

Journalism

The values associated with 'academic' and 'intelligence' monitoring identities were primarily oppositional, with the monitor being set in contrast to the 'journalistic' editor.

¹¹ 'The Monitor's Case', n.d. (c.1947), KL.

¹² Monitoring Notebook, 9 July 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1; R. Seth, 'A Short Explanation of the Work of Flash Supervisors', 3 Sep. 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

¹³ Interview with Ernst Gombrich, conducted by Cathy Courtney on 17 Sep. 1999, BL F7736.

In the post-war period, however, in relation to another long-standing dispute, monitors portrayed themselves, not as the antithesis of the journalist, as Gombrich had implied, but as actually conducting much the same work. This dispute arose in the immediate post-war years when monitors, particularly foreign language monitors, launched a bid, through their respective unions, for the upgrading of their pay grade to the same level as that of a sub-editor working in the output department. Monitors claimed, on balance, that their duties and expertise could easily be equated with those of sub-editors, and if anything stressed how their duties seemed to call for a higher grading than that of the sub-editor, as they also had to translate. The first document to set out the justification for this upgrade claim was written in 1947 and entitled 'The Monitor's Case'. There is unfortunately no record of the author for this text but it is worth quoting, for it presents the monitor's case most articulately and with the greatest concision. This, despite the fact the dispute went on continuously for decades, before finally been settled in the 1980s, with the upgrading of monitors. This document is also incidentally one of the only places where the Monitoring Service was explicitly referred to as 'a war-time intelligence service.' The Monitor's Case declared that 'monitoring represents a highly skilled branch of political journalism.' The journalistic analogy was used to demonstrate how editing was merely a continuum of monitoring, and that monitors therefore essentially carried out a similar task to editors:

The division of functions between Monitor and Editor is very similar to that between the Paper's Foreign Correspondent and its Home Editor.¹⁴

An official document on BBC Monitoring from the Second World War had also made this allusion of the monitor to a newspaper reporter, when describing the relationship of the monitor to the Information Bureau supervisor:

The monitor, in fact, stands in the same relation to the Bureau as newspaper reporters to the sub-editors, or as a news agency's correspondent to its cable editors.¹⁵

¹⁴ 'The Monitor's Case', n.d. (c.1947), KL.

¹⁵ 'Monitoring Service Information Bureau', n.d., BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

Gombrich never actually denied that the process of editing or selecting material, as conducted by editors and Bureau supervisors, should rightly be a continuation of the work conducted by monitors. He merely saw journalists' training to spot a news story, as a damaging ethos for the Service to borrow from. A point illustrated by his comment that even *The Times* had recently devoted more space to discussing a kangaroo which had been dressed in a waistcoat, than to the Austrian elections.¹⁶ In practice, there seems to have been a scale by which editors and Bureau supervisors were better or worse according to the place of their prior employment and the type of journalism to which they had been devoted. Karl Lehmann has recalled that the skilled political journalists from London who arrived at the beginning of the war, tended to be replaced once they left, with less skilled sub-editors from the local papers.¹⁷

Archival

The final professional analogy made by monitors, was to that of the archivist. This was mainly an accompaniment to their academic training, as Gombrich recounted:

We academics believed that the Service should also provide documentation for future historians of what happened in the so-called "Ether War", while the journalists considered this attitude pedantic and irrelevant.¹⁸

The archivist analogy, although similar to the academic, seems to have emerged most often in the Service when monitors could not strictly justify, in terms of national security, their plea for particular care and accuracy to be taken over an item. The most dramatic example of this kind was the recording of the final speech of the then temporary German Chancellor Dönitz, announcing that all troops were to lay down arms. On 7 May 1945, when Dönitz came on air from Radio Flensburg, the only remaining operational transmitter of the Third Reich, his speech was duly monitored and the finished text sent up to editorial. The

¹⁶ Gombrich, 'Swansongs', p.466.

¹⁷ Interview with Karl Lehmann.

¹⁸ Gombrich, 'Swansongs', pp.465.

next morning, however, Anatol Goldberg noticed a typing error in the final text and demanded that a reluctant editor destroy the final copy and correct the error: ‘This is the end of the Second World War in Europe. We can’t leave that translation in an imperfect state: What will history say?’ On this occasion the monitors had their way.¹⁹

The archival importance of BBCM reporting was actually proven in the immediate post-war period, when a number of monitors were asked to give evidence against accused Nazi war criminals at the post-war trials. Former monitor George Weidenfeld was asked for depositions and opinions on various members of the Nazi propaganda ministry at one of the associated trials, not Nuremberg. He particularly gathered evidence against Hans Hinkel, whose section had prepared and directed a large amount of viciously anti-Semitic material to one particular area of Germany over a short period of time. Weidenfeld was able to prove this concentration of propaganda material was typical of an operation codenamed ‘propaganda wave’, which was used to prepare a local population for large deportations of Jews in the area.²⁰

More than just as a witness and record of history, there was also a constructive element to the archivist analogy, which originated in contemporary beliefs in the power of analysis. A document of instructions, written for monitors in 1940, stated that one of the purposes of the Monitoring Service was to: ‘provid[e] a permanent record of wireless propaganda, both for the purposes of immediate counter-propaganda and long term propaganda analysis.’²¹ As demonstrated in chapter one, there was a belief that propaganda analysis could help win the war, both by uncovering the hidden strategic intentions of other nations, and by contributing to Britain’s information war. There was also, however, a sense of contributing to the post-war future in the work of those who conducted analytic studies of Nazi propaganda. Of the wartime Monitoring Service Research Section, it was stated in 1940 that its staff of researchers still believed it possible

¹⁹ ‘Listening to War’, BL T3631WC1.

²⁰ George Weidenfeld, *Remembering my Good Friends: An Autobiography* (London: Harper Collins, 1994), p.106; Interview with George Weidenfeld; also mentioned in interview with Lorna Swire.

²¹ ‘A Monitoring Notebook’, 9 July 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

for their work to make a contribution to sociology – expressed as a long-term human project. The longer book-length studies of Nazi propaganda prepared during the war, also expressed a hope that research uncovering the workings of the Nazi regime, specifically its use of propaganda, would contribute to future peace.²²

During the war, monitors might even have been aware that copies of the Daily Digest were already being archived for the purposes of post-war study. In November 1939 the then Director of the Imperial War Museum wrote to the BBC, expressing his concern that in 1919, following the end of the First World War, the Museum had found much information of vital interest already unattainable. To prevent the same thing occurring again, he requested that each BBC department immediately begin forming a record of their wartime activities, which following the war could be made available in galleries, libraries and reference departments.²³ The ensuing correspondence between the two ensured that copies of the Monitoring Service's Daily Digest were retained for immediate transfer, at the end of the war, to both the London School of Economics and Political Science and to the Imperial War Museum.²⁴ The Digests actually began to be transferred directly to LSE and IWM in April 1940 on the condition that they were treated as highly confidential.²⁵ During the same month it was also agreed to send a copy to the British Museum on the same terms.²⁶

The remainder of this chapter will examine how monitors came to recognise the complexities of, listening to, translating, and selecting broadcast material, and study the procedures implemented by the Monitoring Service in the light of this

²² The BBC Monitoring Service', n.d. (c. Feb. 1940), BBC:WAC E8/209/1. Derrick Sington & Arthur Weidenfeld, *The Goebbels Experiment: a Study of the Nazi Propaganda Machine* (London: John Murray, 1942); Ernst Kris & Hans Speier, *German Radio Propaganda: Report on Home Broadcasts during the War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1944). For a study of the work of wartime communication research, particularly Ernst Kris's: Kurt Lang, 'The critical functions of empirical communication research: observations on German-American influences', *Media, Culture and Society* 1 (1979), pp.83-96.

²³ Letter L.R. Bradley, IWM to D-G, 17 Nov. 1939, BBC:WAC E2 409/1.

²⁴ Memo DOI to PREx, 22 Nov. 1939, BBC:WAC E2/409/1; Letter Tallents to Bradley, 25 Nov. 1939, BBC:WAC E2/409/1.

²⁵ Letter DOI, 15 Apr. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/409/2.

²⁶ Letter DOI to W.C. Dickinson, LSE, 15 Apr. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/409/2.

knowledge. Moreover, it will consider how the monitoring identities, described above, affected the work of the Monitoring Service on a practical level.

Listening

Before monitors even began to think about what to report from a bulletin, or indeed how to report it, they firstly had to correctly hear and understand what they were listening to. This was not an easy process in the wartime Monitoring Service as, despite the efforts of the engineers, monitors had to battle with poorly received signals, which were often subject to interference and jamming. In addition to these problems, monitors frequently did not monitor directly from radio, but used recordings made on wax cylinders, which could be shaved and reused. The cylinders were fragile, prone to chipping, and not always shaved correctly, leaving fragments of previous recordings to mix with the subsequently recorded programme.²⁷ The frustrations experienced by monitors due to technical difficulties are evident in the transcripts they left behind. See for instance the transcript of a broadcast from Rome made by an English monitor:

This news bulletin was so weakly recorded that it is inaudible for all practical purposes and not worth transcribing. A[n] unsatisfactory feature is the fact that apparently owing to a technical hitch a telephone conversation by the engineers of the BBC has been superimposed in the third section of the first record.²⁸

The phrases ‘poor reception’ and ‘cylinders generally incomprehensible’ also scatter the early transcripts. The barriers to accurate hearing were initially so acute that the Monitoring Service asserted in early 1940:

Experience has shown that, in general, it is only natives of the countries concerned who can be relied upon to catch and transcribe accurately, even with the help of recordings, transmissions received often in conditions far from ideal, owing to natural or man made interference.²⁹

²⁷ Olive Renier & Vladimir Rubinstein, *Assigned to Listen: the Evesham experience, 1939-43* (London: BBC External Services, 1986), p.65.

²⁸ Rome (Italy): In English: 00.15 BST 31 Aug. 1939, IWM: BBC MST D12.

²⁹ ‘The BBC Monitoring Service’, n.d. (c. Feb. 1940), BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

The barriers to accurate hearing meant monitors were often reluctant to commit themselves to one interpretation of a single word or phrase, and frequently added question marks on their transcripts to alert the editor and consumer to this uncertainty. Editors, who desired to make their reports as readable as possible for consumers, often omitted such queries from the Digest. However, the prudence of including monitor's uncertainties as to what they heard was gradually recognised as the war progressed. This was especially the case when the word was deemed of particular importance, either to the meaning of a sentence, or in itself, for instance if it was an important place name.

Anatol Goldberg, the monitor who wrote most extensively on this aspect of monitoring, stressed that monitors also became more skilled at hearing as the war progressed:

[Monitors] ears became attuned to poor reception, their minds learned how to translate odd sounds into existing notions which fitted logically into the context: they learned to hear.³⁰

In the process of 'learning to hear', the more astute monitors began to develop their own philosophy on listening or monitoring. Goldberg recalled how a theory of listening was still prevalent at the beginning of the war that a monitor should simply write what they hear.³¹ This was nonsense, Goldberg stated, as the possibility of accurately transcribing a word just from its sounds was nearly impossible, as illustrated regularly by the encountering of unheard of place names. Furthermore, there was a constant danger of mishearing, or of the brain substituting one word for another, so it was essential to consider the sense of a sentence both as a logical whole and as part of the wider context of the subject under discussion.³²

³⁰ Anatol Goldberg, "'The Ears of Britain': Personal impressions of the BBC Monitoring Service in Wartime", Sep. 1945, BBC:WAC C73.

³¹ BBC radio programme 'Listening to War', by Alvar Lidell, broadcast 14 Jan. 1980, BL T3631WC1.

³² Goldberg, 'The Ears of Britain', BBC:WAC C73.

A letter from 1950, which attempted to justify the call for the upgrading of monitors' pay grade, in the dispute alluded to above, supported Goldberg's assertions as regards to listening:

Listening to a broadcast is not merely a function of the ear but also of the brain. Correct hearing presupposes an intimate knowledge of the subject matter as well as of the speaker's language. Good listening depends on unusually wide background knowledge and a very high degree of concentration. In poor reception conditions the degree of concentration required is very unusual indeed, and to listen successfully, a monitor must have good intuition, perseverance, intellectual mobility and integrity.³³

Monitoring, as Goldberg asserted, did not mean - as was generally assumed - translating what had been heard at this end. 'This is wrong', he declared, 'monitoring means trying to establish what has been said at the other end.'³⁴ In fulfilling this task monitors were helped by four considerations: knowledge, common sense, language structure and the ability to relisten.

Firstly, as both Ernst Gombrich and Anatol Goldberg pointed out, monitoring did not rely on unusually good hearing. Although the monitor had to be reasonably sound in this, the more important factor was the monitor's knowledge. As Goldberg, taking inspiration on correct hearing from Goethe, asserted, 'Man only hears what he knows. He can only perceive what he feels, imagines or thinks.'³⁵ This point was well illustrated when one monitor, much to the consternation of Ernst Gombrich who happened to be the monitoring supervisor on duty at the time, reported a passage from Goethe's *Faust* as: 'Weather report: The Reich is free of ice.'³⁶ Gombrich himself further confirmed the impossibility of monitoring phonetically, when he stated that there was a definite perceptibility of sound, in that stressed syllables could be heard with greater clarity than unstressed, vowels better than consonants etc. Therefore any attempt to monitor phonetically, without knowledge, would have resulted in one after another of the

³³ Letter to NEC, 1 Mar. 1950, KL.

³⁴ Goldberg, 'The Ears of Britain', BBC:WAC C73.

³⁵ Goldberg, 'The Ears of Britain', BBC:WAC C73.

³⁶ Renier & Rubinstein, p.93.

sounds disappearing, as reception deteriorated, until the monitor was left with a meaningless jumble of noise.³⁷

Secondly, in order to identify more than individual words, monitor's knowledge of relevant political, historical and geographical factors, had to be accompanied by common sense. The monitor's assumption had to be that the sentence made logical sense, no matter how confident they were over what they thought they might have heard, and no matter how good reception was. For as Gombrich has written, 'People talk much less nonsense than they are credited with. Or rather, if they talk nonsense, they talk meaningless clichés but not 'such stuff as madmen tongue but brain not'.³⁸ This applied both to the logical flow of a sentence, and also to the logical meaning of a passage as a whole. Again if a sentence, although making logical sense in itself, seemed entirely unrelated to the broadcast as a whole, then the monitor had to assume they had heard incorrectly. In order to improve the accuracy of monitor's reports, monitoring supervisors would periodically check them for sense before passing them on to editorial. Supervisors became familiar with the 'different virtues' of each monitor and those known to have worse hearing, or less general knowledge, or reputations for inaccuracy were frequently asked to check their reports. Supervisors could even request another monitor to do the checking, if they had particular concerns.³⁹

Thirdly, for words that were not misheard but unheard, the monitor required a great deal of intuition and common sense to attempt to fill in the gaps. Sir George Weidenfeld has commented how different languages were often easier or harder to monitor, in such conditions, due to the structure of the language. German, for instance, he stated, was comparatively easy to monitor in poor reception conditions for, possessing strict clauses, it was at least possible to discern who was doing the something to who.⁴⁰ An intimate knowledge of the structure of the language being monitored was essential to discern the logical possibilities of what was being said in any language.

³⁷ Ibid., p.75.

³⁸ Ibid., p.77.

³⁹ Memo on Editing, 28 May 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1; Memo DMS to Director Broadcasting Division, MoI, 23 June 1941, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

⁴⁰ Interview with George Weidenfeld.

Finally if a word or phrase could not be heard or had been recognisably misheard by the monitor then there were several options, which depended primarily on how much time and effort the monitor felt they could afford to devote to the matter. If the word or even bulletin as a whole was deemed fairly inessential, then they could simply abandon the attempt and move on to the next bulletin. If, however, the monitor believed the item to be important, they could employ several techniques when re-listening to it. Firstly, as Gombrich has noted, such an effort required the right sort of concentration:

In its ideal state it should make you forget everything else save the perception on which you are concentrating. You should forget your own effort.⁴¹

Goldberg too, has stated that in order to avoid being overcome by the horrors of what they had to listen to, monitors often became hardened and cynical whilst at work, for it was only in this way that they could muster the necessary concentration to struggle with the difficulty of deciphering, through poor reception conditions, the meaning of what they heard.⁴² Listening was an intellectual effort, allowing the mind to consider the context and logically possible and appropriate forms that the gap may take. Incidentally, monitors were recorded as almost always managing to retain this detachment from what they were listening to, whilst on duty. Being constantly bombarded with enemy propaganda was no doubt wearing, but monitors, particularly those central European monitors who were refugees from the Nazi regimes' persecution, were well inured against the arguments and language used in the broadcasts they listened to. As one monitor stated:

The conviction that the war was the right thing and that it was a war against the forces of evil was absolute, nobody questioned it and that helped the monitors to work in the beginning against waves of bad news all through 1940 and also... being parted from their family.⁴³

⁴¹ Renier & Rubinstein, p.79.

⁴² Goldberg, 'The Ears of Britain', BBC:WAC C73.

⁴³ 'Listening to War', by Leslie Chamberlain, 25 Sep. 2003. IWM SA 25507.

With respect to trying to catch a missing word, Gombrich further noted that it was dangerous to concentrate merely on the small inaudible patch, ‘Six or ten syllables may answer to all sorts of projections, but thirty or forty are less likely to trick you.’ Another technique employed at the Monitoring Service was playing a recording back at different speeds and volumes. However, this again depended on the monitor’s mind-set, for it was difficult to let the sound units form into different patterns once they had already been perceived in a certain way. Here enlisting the help of other monitors could be invaluable.⁴⁴ The decision to produce verbatim reports in their language of origin, for rebroadcasting in British overseas broadcasts, meant the monitor’s task was all the more difficult, for it was necessary not just to understand the meaning of a sentence, but necessary to catch every word, particularly given the BBC’s desired reputation for accurate reporting.⁴⁵ This had an archival aspect too, for it was felt by the academics vital for history to accurately record at least the speeches of major national leaders. The conflict between the demands of speed and accuracy in producing reports reoccurred throughout the war, adding to the perceived tension between monitors and editors, the former frequently feeling misunderstood and unappreciated.

Translation

The philosophy of translation was a subject at the heart of the monitoring enterprise and is, as a former wartime monitor recently commented, in some ways the most interesting aspect of the Monitoring Service.⁴⁶

This issue of translation is particularly well illustrated by the fact it was often necessary for monitors to translate across cultural divides. Monitors were individuals, many moreover were multilingual individuals, possessing a cosmopolitan background, and their identity and translation decisions could not be defined by a strict relationship to their nationality or first language. It is undeniable, however, that by 1939 a breach had opened between - what the Nazis

⁴⁴ Renier & Rubinstein, pp.79; 77.

⁴⁵ Interview with Karl Lehmann; Memo C(ES) to D-G, 7 Oct. 1943, BBC:WAC R13/169/7.

⁴⁶ Interview with Karl Lehmann.

were keen on emphasising prior to their invasion of the Soviet Union - Old and New Europe. Whether the currents of Nazism and fascism, of Stalinism or communism, are viewed as an aberration and abandonment of the European tradition and enlightenment project, or rather as an extreme development of currents within that culture, there is no doubt that the previously shared basis of European culture had disappeared by 1939. Moreover this breach had occurred within the lifetime of most monitors.

The situation was particularly complicated in cases where that culture had penetrated right through to transform the semantic meaning of a country's national language, as in the case of Germany and the Soviet Union. Commentators of the Soviet and Nazi regimes have both attested to the capacity of language change to alter perception among users. This perception has been shared both by those who viewed the original alternation in language as entirely the result of deliberate state manipulation - as stressed by Orwell as regard to Russian under the Soviet Union - or whether they recognised it was to some extent an unconscious reflection of altered attitudes or *Weltanschauung* - an element of which pervaded Victor Klemperer's account of life under the Nazi regime.⁴⁷

The totalitarian regimes of Europe, based on new ideologies, but still operating in traditional language, tended to adopt, and distort the meaning of pre-existing words and phrases. The linguist George Steiner proffers his opinion that when such appropriation of language occurs, particularly when antithetical meanings are forced on the same word, 'translation in the ordinary sense becomes impossible.' In fact, he continued:

To translate a Stalinist text on peace or freedom under proletarian dictatorship into a non-Stalinist idiom, using the same time-honoured words is to produce a polemic gloss, a counter-statement of values.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ See George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (London: Penguin, 2003), especially discussion of 'Trotskyist', pp.247-250; and also implicitly *Nineteen Eighty-Four*; Victor Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich* (London: Continuum, 2006).

⁴⁸ George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.35.

So where did this leave the monitor if a significant proportion of what they heard was strictly untranslatable? Could language be dissociated from cultural context? Did irretrievable loss occur in translation? An attempt to answer such questions quickly led to the heart of traditional disputes over how best to translate, and indeed how best to monitor. Was word for word translation the best policy or should the translator abandon strict literalness, instead aiming to convey the essential meaning of a given sentence or passage. As Steiner has also recorded, these were questions long central to discussions of translation:

Whatever treatise on the art of translation we look at, the same dichotomy is stated: as between 'letter' and 'spirit', 'word' and 'sense'.⁴⁹

As far as directing Britain's own propaganda effort was concerned, driven as it was by the desire to educate and explain contradiction to overseas audiences, this certain untranslatability was not a problem. In fact the Monitoring Service began producing Digests containing broadcast extracts in their language of origin, so the exact original phrasing could be broadcast back.⁵⁰ In November 1940 at an Overseas Divisional Meeting, the Director of European Services reported that language staff felt themselves out of touch with new phrases in use in Europe, and particularly in Germany. As a result, a one-week exchange scheme was agreed, by which one monitor went to London for a week to study the needs of output departments, and one announcer/translator went to Wood Norton to study the language used in German broadcasting.⁵¹

The problem of untranslatability posed a greater obstacle, however, for the reporting of political items, such as speeches by government officials, and also for the more analytical purposes to which BBC Monitoring material was put. What did the passage really mean? How would its intended audience receive it? Was any new use of language discernable which could indicate an altered opinion or stance? These questions required an understanding of the regimes' use of language, use of propaganda, and moreover of the general assumptions

⁴⁹ Steiner, p.275.

⁵⁰ For an account of these selected foreign-language Digests, refer to pp.93-94.

⁵¹ Extract from Overseas Divisional Meeting Minutes, 20 Oct. 1940 & 27 Nov. 1940, BBC:WAC R13/169/3.

and attitudes of the regime itself. Monitors were not, however, supposed to analyse the material they monitored. The primary aim of BBC Monitoring was to provide easily readable translations and summaries of important broadcast material. Within these guidelines, the Service struggled to convey an adequate account of what had been said over the airwaves.

Any belief in the official perception of translation as a mechanical process was challenged during the initial weeks of BBC Monitoring's history, when large divergences in reporting style became evident on monitors' transcripts. The style of reporting in the printed Digest also varied considerably, as monitors and editors sought to develop the most appropriate method to report the spoken broadcast into translated English text.

The altering or correcting of monitors' transcripts by the editorial department was furthermore a source of tension between the monitoring and editing sections. Many of the foreign language monitors employed by the BBC had arrived in Britain only fairly recently and their English was not fluent. Monitors' reports, it was argued, therefore had to be altered to improve their language and style, 'not for aesthetic reasons but because imperfect English could easily lead to confusion.'⁵² By comparing the Digest reports with monitors' transcripts of the same items, however, it is possible to see why monitors occasionally felt editors had needlessly distorted the meaning of their translations. One item, included in a German broadcast from Cologne on 30 August 1939, reported an article by a Dr Ley, in which he explained the reason why food cards had been introduced. The translation of the item in the original monitor's transcript does not read particularly well in English, as illustrated by this extract:

...to satisfy impartially both rich and poor; also to make it clear to our adversaries that hunger will not prevent us from making war.⁵³

The edited version, however, seemed to needlessly distort the monitor's phrasing and amplified the original interpretation of the item's meaning:

⁵² Memo on Editing, 28 May 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

⁵³ Cologne (Germany): News in German: 20.01 BST 30 Aug. 1939, IWM: BBC MST A161.

...to make it clear to our enemies that hunger will not prevent us from fighting for our rights until we are victorious.⁵⁴

When, in November 1939, complaints as to divergent editorial style and exposition in the Digest were finally addressed, it was recommended that sub-editors whilst aiming at maximum compression must not try to improve on the broadcast.⁵⁵ Differences of opinion over how far monitors' reports should adhere to the phrasing of the original broadcast nevertheless continued. Karl Lehmann, who did not join the Service until 1942, has spoken in particular of the difficulty in translating speeches by Hitler, which tended to lose all the power contained in the oratory and look consequently uninspiring when faithfully translated into perfect written English:

If you translated a Hitler speech into excellent English, like a *Times* leader, the editors would say, "Oh well done, it reads beautifully" but you had actually totally falsified it. I mean you had made something crude elegant. But if you put it into crude English they would say, "Oh, you can't translate." It was very, very, very difficult.⁵⁶

As Rubinstein and Renier questioned in their study of the wartime years: 'could a service devoted to the study of propaganda afford to neglect the tricks of style employed by broadcasters?'⁵⁷

Wartime guidelines written for, and by, monitors in July 1940 advocated a mixed approach to translation, which was at times ambiguous. As a general reflection, the guidelines reminded monitors that they should resist the tendency to adhere too closely to the syntax or wording of the foreign language and instead focus on producing a clear and intelligible report. The report then, however, listed a number of different translation methods, and recommended that different methods be applied to different types of broadcast items. Word-for-word translation was advocated for the reporting of items such as military

⁵⁴ Cologne (Germany): News in German: 20.00 BST 30 Aug. 1939, in Digest, 31 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MSD 1.

⁵⁵ Letter J. L. Lawrence to Monitoring Service, 15 Nov. 1939, BBC:WAC E2/411.

⁵⁶ Interview with Karl Lehmann.

⁵⁷ Renier & Rubinstein, p.80.

communiqués. Sentence-by-sentence translation was suggested for the reporting of German home broadcasts and most speeches. For talks and features meanwhile, it was stated that these rarely required full treatment and should rather be ‘reported on’. For the reporting of propaganda, it was specifically stated that the tone and style of the broadcast was often more important than the subject matter:

In some cases it is clearly even more important that you should catch the spirit of, say, a rousing appeal, or a venomous diatribe, than that you should keep to the literal text.⁵⁸

These instructions appeared to suggest three clear sets of translation priorities to suit the reporting of different types of item: (1) literal accuracy over readability for communiqués; (2) readability over exact phrasing, but also content over oratorical style, for German home broadcasts; (3) clear but free reporting, prioritising style and impact over content and phrasing, for talks and features.⁵⁹ In practice, however, the division was not so easy to uphold. Government departments and the BBC also wanted to be informed about the phrases used in German propaganda, and talks sometimes included passages that could only be interpreted by studying the exact phrasing of the original broadcast.⁶⁰ Neither was translating sentence-by-sentence an exact science. Thus forming a judgement as to how to report any item frequently involved knowledge, or an assessment as to why an item might be useful to different consumers. Translation within the Monitoring Service was therefore a subjective process, in which general guidelines could only take monitors so far: it could never be a mechanical process.

The Monitoring Service, however, implemented a variety of measures to improve the quality and consistency of monitor’s translations. To standardise translation practice, and so limit any confusion or potentially dangerous misunderstanding, a German terminology committee met at one time, and

⁵⁸ ‘A Monitoring Notebook’, 9 July 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

⁵⁹ ‘A Monitoring Notebook’, 9 July 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

⁶⁰ R Seth, ‘A Short Explanation of the Work of Flash Supervisors’, 3 Sep. 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

glossaries of specialist vocabulary were maintained.⁶¹ Monitoring supervisors, assigned to the listening room, were also made responsible for maintaining consistency in the terminology and spelling used in monitored reports. They also acted as a link between the listening and editorial units, by which any queries regarding a monitor's report could be dealt with.⁶² Monitors were furthermore encouraged to include a record of the original language of a broadcast within their report, if they regarded this as valuable:

If you feel that any word or passage of special significance defies exact translation, or deserves to be placed on record in its original form, you should also add the original language in brackets.⁶³

Monitors regarded as having greater skill in translation were further assigned the bulletins regarded most difficult to monitor, such as the regular fifteen minute broadcasts by commentators like Fritzsche and Admiral Dönitz who produced carefully constructed and well spoken talks, which required especially careful translation.⁶⁴

Selection

A memo from Major Burton of the editorial unit, even prior to the war's outbreak, suggests those actually involved in the monitoring process understood that monitors shaped the content and style of the Digest:

[U]ntil the people working on this Digest have some indication of what the various Government Departments want, it is very difficult to know how much to include and how much to leave out, and in exactly what way to treat the original teleprinter version which is already in many cases considerably summarised.⁶⁵

The described difficulty for editors, in knowing what information consumers required was therefore the same as that faced by monitors, when choosing how to report or translate the spoken broadcast. The most common answer to a

⁶¹ Memo Secretan to DMS, 20 May 1943, BBC:WAC E8/209/2.

⁶² 'A Monitoring Notebook', 9 July 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Renier & Rubinstein, pp.66-67.

⁶⁵ Memo Burton to DOI, 2 Sep. 1939, BBC:WAC E2/413.

realisation of this sort, within intelligence literature, is to point to the necessity of establishing frequent and extensive two-way communication between the different stages of the intelligence process. For their internal organisation, however, the Monitoring Service decided to implement a procedure aimed at reducing the involvement of monitors in selection. This was the so-called 'confessional' system by which Information Bureau supervisors were appointed to the listening rooms to instruct monitors how to select and treat the material in the bulletins to which they listened.

This decision to appoint Bureau supervisors was driven by several factors. The first of these were the prevalent attitudes of the time, which assumed a pattern of hierarchy and natural division of duty. When established in 1939, BBC Monitoring ended up with a number of comparatively progressive leading figures, including Richard Marriott and Oliver Whitley. Their efforts to institute a less hierarchical structure in the Monitoring Service, however, were not always successful. In November 1940, Whitley, as chief monitoring supervisor, sought to establish a 'Monitor's Panel' by which monitors could have a role in their own management. The official response to the proposals exemplified prevalent hierarchical attitudes to organisational management:

This seems to me to be entirely wrong in principle. The management of any unit must be in the hands of the responsible officials at the head of the unit.⁶⁶

In addition to these initial assumptions over how best to run an organisation, wartime fears over security further reinforced the non-sharing of information within the service. The 'confessional' system, as far as the management was concerned, was desirable for it placed the sole responsibility for output with the normally English News Bureau supervisor or Digest editor. That concerns over security influenced the organisation of the wartime Monitoring Service is supported by the strong warnings issued in a directive regarding the post-war reorganisation of the Service. As monitors were now to officially be given the task of selecting material, they were to be allowed to see directives covering the

⁶⁶ Memo AGEO to DPA(O), 19 Nov. 1940. BBC:WAC R13/169/3.

intelligence requirements of government departments. Given this, the reorganisation plans issued a warning:

It must be emphasised that these requirements are classified as “SECRET”, and any divulgence of them to any persons not operationally employed in the Monitoring Service as from December 2nd will be regarded as a serious breach of the Official Secrets Act.⁶⁷

This particular allowance seems incidentally to have never been put into practice. Karl Lehmann has suggested that as the document in which this new procedure was written was only a plan, the policy must have been dropped or postponed by the end of war, and then completely abandoned once the Cold War set in, and the danger of Soviet espionage became much greater than any wartime spying had been.⁶⁸

Documentation from the Service’s post-war years, relating to the question of monitors’ and editors’ pay grades, further indicates both the hierarchical assumptions of the wartime service, and the fact that this was partly driven by security fears over the employment of non-UK nationals, often from central Europe. ‘The Monitor’s Case’ commented on the ‘confessional’ organisation of BBC Monitoring:

The arrangement seemed... desirable, as, by reducing the monitor’s responsibility to a minimum, it appeared to minimise the dependence of the service – a wartime intelligence service – on the discretion of foreigners.⁶⁹

The problem with this system, as the document further elucidated, was that it depended on the assertion that ‘translation and interpretation were independent processes that could be separated at will’, a position which had since been proved impracticable.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ ‘Monitoring Service Reorganisation’, M.A. Frost, 28 Nov. 1945, KL.

⁶⁸ Letter Karl Lehmann to author, 22 Mar. 2009.

⁶⁹ ‘The Monitor’s Case’ (c. 1947), KL.

⁷⁰ ‘The Monitor’s Case’ (c. 1947), KL.

This position was impracticable partly because not every monitor could have logistically queued up with every single bulletin they listened to in order to receive instruction. As one former monitor has commented, the system would have ground to a halt within hours. In fact the system often worked the other way around – a monitor would hear an item they thought was a Flash and go and tell their supervisor to teleprint it.⁷¹ In certain cases, as Lorna Swire has commented, ‘any fool could have told what these [Flashes] were’, but spotting the importance of other broadcast items was a much more subjective affair, which would have been assisted by knowledge of consumer interests.⁷² It was also the responsibility of monitors to identify all aspects of an item that could make it valuable to consumers, and thus worth reporting. In September 1940, monitors were urged to thoroughly consider talks from all angles, before reporting them to Information Bureau as being of no value:

It should not be forgotten that very often a sentence, or two, in the middle of an otherwise dull talk may contain interesting pieces of information useful either as News, or Intelligence, or both.⁷³

The biggest reason why the ‘confessional’ system did not work in the way intended was because monitors were often asked to produce summaries of what they had heard, rather than full verbatim translations. Summarisation placed increased emphasis on the monitor’s judgement of what the item was primarily about and forced editors, Bureau supervisors and consumers to entirely trust the interpretation made by the monitor. A summary also represented a monitor’s interpretation of a broadcast’s importance at the moment it was written, and did not allow for reinterpretation in the way a full transcription did. In this respect, former monitor Karl Lehmann supported the wartime and post-war requests from the American FCC and OWI for full treatment of items, in preference to summaries. There was an element of the ‘archivist’ mentality in this preference for verbatim texts over summaries too. As Gombrich has written, ‘a quotation of

⁷¹ Interview with Karl Lehmann.

⁷² Interview with Lorna Swire.

⁷³ R Seth, ‘A Short Explanation of the Work of Flash Supervisors’, 3 Sep. 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

a passage, as opposed to a rambling “Nacherzaehlung”, ‘is a document, a fact, a piece of evidence on which interpretations can rightly be based.’⁷⁴

Reporting some items more thoroughly than others was, nevertheless, deemed essential to BBC Monitoring’s operation:

These varying degrees of selective treatment are applied mainly because in no other way would it be possible, with staff and equipment of approximately the amount at present available to the Monitoring Service, to cover as many broadcasts each day.⁷⁵

Apart from time, the Digest also only had limited space in which to fit a vast amount of material, due to wartime paper shortages, and leaving summarisation entirely to the editing process would have been a waste of resources and monitors’ time.

Given that summarisation was deemed essential, in order to make the maximum use of resources and also save reader’s time, Gombrich sought to set out what was involved in constructing a good summary. Firstly, he asserted that a summary, by definition, should make a broadcast shorter, not just replace it with an indirect style commentary. The original phrase, ‘Did not Hitler in ‘Mein Kampf’ advocate the conquest of the Ukraine?’ was infinitely more useful, he asserted, than how it had once been summarised: ‘follows quotation from Hitler’s ‘Mein Kampf’ on Germany’s mission in the East.’ Secondly, he stated that if only part of a broadcast was to be summarised, a practice often used in the Service, then the report would be severely devalued unless it was made clear which part of a broadcast was summarised and which was not.⁷⁶ Lastly, Gombrich held that summarisation was not the same as leaving out material, i.e. ‘Butter, margarine and cooking fats’ could not be summarised as ‘butter and margarine’, but could occasionally be summarised as ‘fats’. Whether such a summarisation could be made, depended on the monitor’s assessment of what the broadcast was about, why it was made, and what information potential Monitoring consumers would be interested in. Gombrich therefore stated that

⁷⁴ Interview with Karl Lehmann; Gombrich, ‘Swansongs’, pp.465.

⁷⁵ Memo for recipients of Monitoring Service material, Oct. 1941, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

⁷⁶ Gombrich, ‘Swansongs’, p.465.

‘there is no such thing as an objective standard of “importance”’. Even the skilled summariser or analyst approached the material with his own perceptions of importance in mind.⁷⁷

Oliver Whitley, as chief monitoring supervisor, recognised that monitors needed to be made aware of the type of material useful to consumers and the best way in which to report this material, if they were to conduct their task of reporting and summarising effectively. In mid-1940, Whitley wrote to the Deputy Director of Overseas Intelligence, John Salt, to request that monitors be allowed access to the Service’s documents other than the Daily Digest, such as the Studies in Broadcast Propaganda. He expressed his view that it would be useful for monitors to see such documents, so that they could learn what material the authors of such studies found useful in making their analyses. Whitley further pointed out that such an allowance would fit into the current policy of encouraging monitors to be made ‘increasingly aware of the uses to which their work [was] put, and thus to improve their capacity to detect the clues which those in London are all the time seeking.’⁷⁸ Salt promptly agreed to Whitley’s suggestion, stating that the label ‘secret’ had originally been added to emphasise their confidential nature, when it had been suggested that they be made available to the press. ‘As far as BBC staff are concerned, however,’ he stated, ‘the advantages of disseminating are greater than those of limited circulation’.⁷⁹ This move did perhaps provide monitors with a better overall sense of the mindset and requirements of those involved in producing the BBC Monitoring Service’s more analytic documents. However, they gave only a sense of the author’s perceptions of consumer requirements, and therefore did not help to settle disputes over what customers of BBC Monitoring should be informed about. At a meeting between monitoring supervisors and Information Bureau supervisors in May 1943, Ilse Barea, by then a monitoring supervisor, stated that she thought the greatest single cause of friction between monitoring supervisors and Information Bureau was the question of the treatment of summaries.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp.466-467.

⁷⁸ Memo Whitley to DDOI, 23 Apr. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/413.

⁷⁹ Memo DDOI to Whitley, 26 Apr. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/413.

⁸⁰ Minutes of meeting between monitoring supervisors and information bureau supervisors, 27 May 1943, BBC:WAC E8/209/2.

Once Information Bureau supervisors had been established at Wood Norton, they alerted monitors to a number of points to look out for in the next 24 hours' monitoring by writing them on a blackboard in the listening room. A photograph of this board, included in Renier and Rubinstein's book of the Service, shows that these boards were mainly used for tracking broadcast reports as to claimed plane losses and places bombed, which would be altered as new reports came in.⁸¹ Apart from these specific instructions for reporting military items, however, former monitors assert that they were not given instructions as to what information consumers wished to have recorded.⁸²

One of the difficulties in sharing knowledge as to actual consumer requirements with monitors was that they were relatively scarce, incomplete, and prone to adaptation as the military and political situation altered. The previous chapter recounted the majority of such requests for which there is remaining documentation, for the entire wartime period. It therefore seems that those on the output side of the Monitoring Service were only slightly better informed than monitors about actual consumer requirements. There was a degree of ignorance throughout the Monitoring Service due to security considerations. Ernst Gombrich recalled an occasion on which he asked a fellow monitor – described as 'very intelligent' – what the Pope had said in his recent broadcast from Radio Vatican, to which the monitor had just listened. Gombrich received a dismissive one-word response: 'Atoms!' Recalling the exchange over fifty years later Gombrich explained how, 'The Pope had opened a Laboratory in the Vatican, and talked about the power hidden in the atom, which we [had] considered to be of no political relevance. How could we have known?'⁸³

Monitors, for their part, found it impossible to complete their work, of translating, summarising, and unofficially selecting material to their own standards, without some sense of how the material they produced was used. Gombrich thus asserted that in the absence of almost any knowledge as to

⁸¹ 'A Monitoring Notebook', 9 July 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1; Renier & Rubinstein, p.62.

⁸² Interview with Ewald Osers; Interview with George Weidenfeld; Interview with Karl Lehmann; Interview with Lorna Swire.

⁸³ Gombrich, 'Swansongs', p.465; also mentioned in interview with Lorna Swire.

consumer requirements, what was needed by both monitor and editor, to the degree they also remained uninformed, was a bold act of imagination. They should imagine themselves sitting, for example, in the Foreign Office, and consider what type of information they would most like to receive – and this should be their main guidance to their selection or summarisation decisions.⁸⁴ A whole range of factors therefore informed employees' individual decisions as to what information should be reported and how it should be presented. These included known consumer requirements; their perceptions of consumer requirements; their knowledge and views of the national and international military, political, social and economic situation; and their degree of awareness of a number of specialised subject areas, including music, science and farming. As a BBC memo from mid-1941 declared: 'Experience has shown that no one is too intelligent to be a monitor, but it is difficult to find people of the requisite intelligence who are willing to endure the monotony.'⁸⁵ This final point about monotony suggests further analogies to the intelligence profession, where much intelligence work is described as boring, despite its hidden complexities. It also suggests how monitoring gained its initial reputation as a simple, mechanical process.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how monitors approached and developed their new role during the Second World War, when monitoring was still in its infancy. Monitors learned to listen; learned to report the spoken broadcast; battled to have the complexity of translation recognised; and - contrary to official policy - learned to select material on the basis of assumed consumer requirements. It was primarily when forced to defend the complexity and expertise, required of their new profession, that monitors came to explicitly define and reflect on their work. Their alternate allusions of the monitoring profession to that of the academic, or journalist were not contradictory. Both allusions were adopted to disprove the perception of monitoring as a straightforward task of translation and

⁸⁴ Gombrich, 'Swansongs', pp.466-467.

⁸⁵ Memo DMS to War Services Officer, 15 July 1941, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

transcription, and instead assert the monitor's authority over the broadcasts they listened to. As declared in a 'Monitoring Handbook' from 1940:

Monitoring does not, nor ever can, consist of a more or less mechanical system of transcribing and translating. The very process of hearing requires a sound background knowledge, familiarity with names in the news, of the phraseology and terminology of a particular broadcaster, a clear grasp of what may have been said and what cannot have been. Intelligent reporting and summarising requires, in addition, a certain "news sense", a feeling for propaganda trends and a sense of proportion.⁸⁶

This chapter has further demonstrated that monitoring was but one stage in a continuous process of selection and indirect analysis on behalf of consumers, and could not be artificially divorced from the task of editing, nor from the stages of analysis and eventual consumer use of the material. Many of the reflections made in this study, as to the role of the monitor, therefore also have relevance to the editor, report writer and News Bureau supervisor, as well as to the intelligence process as a whole.

Finally, the wartime concerns for security and hierarchy, described in this chapter, suggest that the consumer requests received by the Monitoring Service were rarely passed on to monitors; a contention supported by former monitors' testimony. Tasking or collection requirements were thus regarded as more confidential than the documents based on monitored material, even the weekly analyses, to which monitors were allowed access. This chapter, however, has indicated that in order to conduct their work effectively monitors required knowledge as to the reasons for which broadcasts were being monitored, and the uses to which the material would be put. From the material selected for inclusion in the Digest and Monitoring Reports, and the information selected for Flash, they would have gained some indications as to the type of information that was valuable. To fill in the rest, as Gombrich stated, they had to make intelligent assumptions as to the value of the material to multiple consumers, for instance an official in the Foreign Office.

⁸⁶ 'A Monitoring Notebook', 9 July 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

The following case study chapters explore the interconnected nature of monitoring, editing and consumer use of BBCM material in greater depth, and assess the impact of information sharing within the Service on the value of its reporting. The following chapters also examine the extent to which monitoring and editing employees adapted their reporting techniques and procedures over time, as the Service expanded, in order to increase the consistency of their reporting and respond flexibly to the changing strategic position.

Chapter 5

Case Study One

Poland, 29 August – 17 September 1939

The German broadcasting station at Gleinitz¹ was raided by Poles to-day. The Poles made their way into the broadcasting room and broadcast a proclamation in Polish and then in German. Police arrived and a number of the Polish raiders were killed. The raid was considered to have been a signal to Polish terrorists, supported by Polish regular troops. Detachments barred the way of the invaders. Grave fighting still continues...²

This extract from a German news bulletin, broadcast at 02.15 BST on 1 September 1939, was reported by a newly assigned monitor, stationed deep within the English countryside at Wood Norton, Evesham. The monitor's transcript also listed a number of further attacks, reportedly carried out by Polish insurgents and regular forces, at Kreuzburg and on the new Customs House at Hochlinden. The attack on the broadcasting station at Gleiwitz was, however, the first and clearly the lead story. The front page of that day's *Völkischer Beobachter*, the official Nazi party newspaper, led with the same story of 'outrageous attacks' by Poland, again assigning prominence to the incident at Gleiwitz.³ At 08.50, a monitored broadcast from Berlin proclaimed that the contested Polish town of Danzig had now become German,⁴ and at 10.00, Hitler addressed an extraordinary session of the Reichstag, effectively announcing the start of hostilities: 'This night for the first time Polish regular soldiers fired on our territory. Since 5.45 A.M. we have been returning fire...'⁵ He cited a series of alleged Polish atrocities as justification for the German military action. At

¹ The town, in which it was reported the radio transmitter had been attacked, was spelled in a variety of ways by monitors throughout the morning of 1 September. In a report of a bulletin broadcast at 08.00, the town was reported as 'Vieleidig'. A correction of the spelling was teleprinted to London shortly after this, which identified the town correctly. Despite this, the town still appeared in the Digest as 'Cleiwitz'. (Zeesen (Germany): News in English: 08.00 1 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MST A1; Digest of Foreign Bulletins, 1 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MSD 1.) All times given in British Summer Time

² Zeesen (Germany): News in English: 02.15 1 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MST A1.

³ Nicholas Rankin, *Churchill's Wizards: The British Genius for Deception 1914 – 1945* (London: Faber and Faber, 2008), p.204.

⁴ Berlin (Germany): News in English: 08.50 1 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MST A1.

⁵ Translation of document 2322-PS, Hitler's speech before the Reichstag, 1 Sep. 1939, in 'Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, IV, Office of the United States Chief Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality' (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1946). Avalon project website: <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/2322-ps.asp>, 8 Dec. 2011.

11.40, all German transmitters announced the German 'counter attack into Poland' to the public.⁶ This was to be the start of the Second World War.

The truth behind the attack on the radio transmitter at Gleiwitz did not emerge until after the war. At the Nuremberg trials in 1946, Alfred Helmut Naujocks, a former member of the Nazi Security Service, the SD, made a series of sworn affidavits revealing his lead role in the attack. According to Naujocks, he had been summoned to a meeting with Reinhard Heydrich, head of the SD, in early August 1939, and ordered to simulate an attack by Polish insurgents on the Gleiwitz radio station. During the attack a Polish-speaking announcer would make an anti-German broadcast. Two engineers at Breslau had been ordered to pick up the local broadcast and retransmit it over the national German radio network.⁷ The action was to be part of a wider series of staged attacks, codenamed 'Operation Himmler', which would provide justification for Germany's invasion of Poland. The Gleiwitz attack was special, however, because the faked broadcast was meant to create its own publicity and provide tangible evidence of Polish aggression. As Heydrich reportedly stated: 'practical proof is needed for these attacks on the Poles for the foreign press as well as for German propaganda.'⁸

As events turned out, Naujocks' team was unable to find the landline switch to Breslau and the announcer only managed to broadcast on a local emergency transmitter. It is unclear if anyone even heard the transmission. The propaganda drive, however, had already been set in motion, with the incident being prominently reported by German press and radio. The failure to broadcast the transmission nationwide was viewed as unimportant the following morning, and

⁶ Digest, 1 Sep. 1939 (04.00 – 12.00). IWM: BBC MSD 1.

⁷ Gunter Peis, *The Man Who Started the War* (London: Odhams Press Limited, 1960), pp.116; 120. There is supplementary evidence to support the information supplied by Naujocks. A witness at the Nuremberg trials, Major-General Erwin Lahousen, of the German Abwehr, testified to the existence of the plan, and to the existence of the diary of his superior, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, whose entry for this period provides additional support. The Trial of German War Criminals, Sitting of Nuremberg, Germany, Session 9, 20 Nov. 1945, Nikzor project: <http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/imt/tgmwc/tgmwc-01/tgmwc-01-09-01.shtml>, 17 Jan. 2012.

⁸ William S. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (London: Arrow Books, 1998), p.519; Peis, p.118.

Naujocks, who had been dreading the meeting with his boss, found an unexpectedly warm reception.⁹

This incident demonstrated how important the Nazi regime regarded public opinion, both domestic and international, and illustrated how radio would be central in this battle for public opinion in the war to come. There are a number of aspects to the incident, however, which also indicate the difficulties and responsibilities that BBC Monitoring would face over the following months and years.

Firstly, the incident demonstrated the difficulty that the Monitoring Service and their consumers would have in identifying broadcast items that represented a significant or new development. Prior to the invasion of Poland, German radio had accused Poland of a range of border violations and atrocities, including the persecution of German nationals within Poland.¹⁰ In the early hours of 1 September, the German reports of attacks at Gleiwitz, and various other border locations, thus did not appear as strikingly new to monitors who had spent the last few days listening to many similar reports. An American correspondent, based in Berlin, supported this view in a broadcast at 3.30 on 1 September, when he declared:

[T]his is the fiercest night, we have been through in the present crisis...yet, as far as is known in Berlin, this has had no affect and it looks like it that these incidents will not be taken as an excuse to let loose the guns.¹¹

Secondly, this incident demonstrated that monitoring radio could both provide indications of new political and military developments, and also be used to track international reactions to those developments. International reaction to this attempt by Hitler to portray the German invasion as a defensive measure, against Poland, was actually largely sceptical. As one American commentator declared:

⁹ Shirer, p.222; Peis, p.132.

¹⁰ Zeesen (Germany): News in Arabic: 17.45 29 Aug. 1939; Zeesen (Germany): News in Arabic: 17.45 29 Aug. 1939; Rome (Italy): News in Italian: 15.00 30 Aug. 1939, all in Digest, 30 Aug. 1939 (16.00 – 24.00); Cologne (Germany): News in German: 20.00 and 22.00 30 Aug. 1939, Digest, 31 Aug. 1939 (00.00 – 15.00), all in IWM: BBC MSD 1.

¹¹ Wayne (USA): News in English: 03.30 1 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MST N67.

Certainly no one who has followed events so far can take Hitler's suggestion that Poland is the aggressor seriously. We know that aggression has been constantly on the side of the Germans.¹²

Thirdly, the Gleiwitz attack showed how the monitoring of radio transmissions would be used during the coming Polish campaign and afterwards, as a source of military intelligence. Tracking who controlled particular radio transmitters, in this case Germany or Poland, was used to indicate where the military frontline had reached, and thus also to interpret the contents of the transmissions made. The Gleiwitz incident also, however, clearly demonstrated that radio could be used for deception.

The indicative significance of the Gleiwitz attack may not have been fully appreciated by the Monitoring Service itself during this period. In late August to early September 1939, the Service was at the very beginning of its existence and consequently still unsure, both as to the role BBC Monitoring could play in any future conflict, and of the complications that they would encounter in fulfilling their new task. The Government was desperate for news but little in the way of guidance was given to Monitoring as to the type of information required, or as to how this material would be used. Similarly, or perhaps as a result of this, there were no official guidelines for individual employees as to how to conduct their work. This stage in the Monitoring Service's history is thus a very revealing period in illustrating how the operational procedures and working assumptions of the organisation first developed.

This chapter will utilise the large collection of monitors' transcripts, held by the Imperial War Museum, in conjunction with copies of the Daily Digest prepared by editors at BBC Monitoring, to reconstruct the decisions, in selection and presentation, adopted by Monitoring employees during the first few weeks of the Service's history. Although work at Wood Norton formally began on 26 August, it was several days before the unit stationed there took over the main monitoring

¹² W2XE (America): (no time included) 1 Sep. 1939, Digest, 1 Sep. 1939 (04.00 – 12.00); Also see: Wayne (America): News in English: 17.15 3 Sep. 1939, Digest, 3 Sep. 1939 (08.00 – 16.00), both IWM: BBC MSD 1.

operation from those temporary monitoring enterprises that had been instituted to fill the gap, before Wood Norton was in a position to take over.¹³ This chapter thus considers the first twenty days of monitored output from Wood Norton, spanning the period from 29 August, two days prior to the German invasion of Poland, to 17 September, the day the Soviet Union, in accordance with the secret protocol of the Nazi-Soviet pact, invaded Poland from the east.

Historical Context

The long and short-term causes, for both Hitler's decision to invade Poland on 1 September 1939 and for the declarations of war by France and Britain two days later, have been extensively examined from a wide variety of perspectives. Until the 1960s the predominant historiography was that set by the 1940 publication of *Guilty Men*, which castigated the bankrupt policy of the appeasers in both Britain and France, who had failed to check the aggressive expansion of Nazi Germany, fascist Italy and Imperial Japan.¹⁴ From the 1960s, a revisionist literature appeared, which sought to emphasise the myriad of military, economic and ideological constraints that Western policy makers faced in the 1930s. Recent studies have primarily sought to adopt a more nuanced approach to the subject. A crucial element of this has been the increasing incorporation, into the analysis, of decision-makers' beliefs regarding the strategic balance and their nations' military and psychological resources. Daniel Hucker, for instance, has argued that national leaders' perceptions as to the state of public opinion, in both Britain and France, played an important role in shaping policy.¹⁵ Joseph Maiolo, whilst arguing that the dynamics of the arms race played a crucial independent role in determining the timing of the war's outbreak, also implied that it was again the perceptions of decision-makers, as to the current and future strategic balance, which was significant.¹⁶ In seeking to argue that neither Germany nor the

¹³ For more on the establishment of these temporary monitoring posts refer to p.89.

¹⁴ Cato (pseudonym of Frank Owen, Michael Foot and Peter Howard), *Guilty Men* (London: Gollancz, 1940). For review of appeasement literature see Daniel Hucker, 'The Unending Debate: Appeasement, Chamberlain and the Origins of the Second World War', *Intelligence and National Security* 23:4 (2008), pp.536-551.

¹⁵ Daniel Hucker, *Public Opinion and the End of Appeasement in Britain and France* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

¹⁶ Joseph Maiolo. *Cry Havoc: How the Arms Race Drove the World to War, 1931-1941* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

Western powers desired the outbreak of war in 1939, Richard Overy has furthermore asserted that all parties approached the Polish crisis with a ‘profound misperception of the intentions, room for manoeuvre and military-economic strength of the other side.’ He has particularly argued that all parties failed to adequately appreciate the impact of the Nazi-Soviet pact, signed on 24 August 1939.¹⁷

Wherever they choose to lay the weight of their explanatory analysis, none of these scholars would deny that the drive to war was fundamentally driven by Nazi aggression. The German invasion of Poland on the morning of 1 September 1939 represented Hitler’s desire to unite all German speaking populations under one Empire, and in the longer term secure *Lebensraum* (living space) in the east. More than this, however, it represented Poland’s refusal to make any concessions to Germany.¹⁸ The break-up of Czechoslovakia, followed by the annexation of Memel from Lithuania in March 1939, had destroyed the faith of the Western powers that Hitler could be restrained within the present international order. From that point on attention had turned to Poland, where the formerly German province of Danzig appeared to be Hitler’s next target. German-Polish relations began to deteriorate from March 1939, when Polish Foreign Minister, Joseph Beck, refused a German demand that he travel to Berlin to negotiate the return of Danzig to the Reich. Negotiations for a military alliance against Germany, between France, Britain and the Soviet Union, also broke down, amongst other reasons, because Poland, and especially Foreign Minister Beck, rejected any proposal that would allow Russian troops to enter or cross Polish territory.¹⁹ By August 1939, Poland had become a sticking point for both Germany and the Western powers in a battle concerning far more than the fate of Poland.

Following their declarations of war on 3 September, Britain and France took no military action to prevent or delay the destruction of Poland. Beyond making a

¹⁷ Richard Overy, ‘Strategic Intelligence and the Outbreak of the Second World War’, *War in History* 5:4 (1998), p.451.

¹⁸ Richard Overy, *1939: Countdown to War* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), p.3.

¹⁹ D.G. Williamson, *Poland Betrayed: The Nazi-Soviet Invasions of 1939* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2011), p.58.

series of aerial raids over Germany to drop propaganda leaflets, all that the British Cabinet authorised at the outbreak of the war were naval attacks on the German fleet, which resulted in the scuttling of the first U-Boat on 14 September. As Anita Prazmowska has asserted: ‘In effect, British military action decided upon and taken during September was in no way concerned with the situation on the German-Polish front.’²⁰ The German military advance into Poland meanwhile progressed rapidly throughout September, accompanied by the indiscriminate aerial bombardment of towns and communications.²¹ On 17 September, the fate of the nation was finally settled when the Soviet Union invaded Poland from the east. The Warsaw garrison finally surrendered on 27 September and the last Polish sea defences laid down arms several days later on 1 October.²²

Procedure

Conditions at Wood Norton at the end of August 1939 were still far from ideal for the purposes of a large-scale monitoring operation. The monitoring room, overseen by Richard Marriott, was based in a small property in the grounds of the main house. The engineering or reception hut, where the signals were first received on National HRO Receivers, was located at the top of ‘Tunnel’ hill near to the house. The engineers thus tuned in the radio sets according to a schedule provided by Marriott and fed the transmissions down to the listening room on five specially installed lines. As described in chapter two, other broadcasts were recorded on wax cylinders, using Edifone Electrical Recorders, of which there were initially six. The cylinders were then taken down the hill to the cottage for monitors to listen to. A supervisory monitor was always on duty in the reception hut to decide which programmes should be recorded. In an attempt to gain improved reception, monitors were also sometimes sent up to the hut to listen to

²⁰ Anita J. Prazmowska, *Britain, Poland and the Eastern Front, 1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.182.

²¹ Prazmowska, p.183.

²² Kenneth Koskoda, *No Greater Ally: The Untold Story of Poland's Forces in World War II* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2009).

the broadcasts, where they could cooperate with the engineers in tuning in the receivers to the best frequency.²³

Difficulties occurred, as a result of this arrangement, within the first few weeks of the Service. Firstly, the chief engineer complained that there was insufficiently close contact between the engineers and supervisory monitor on duty in the reception hut. This had resulted in the initial words or sentences of many important broadcasts, not previously scheduled, being missed. Evidence of this can be found on surviving monitors' transcripts from the period.²⁴ Secondly, the number of radio sets was regarded as insufficient, as many of the sets were taken up in receiving Marriott's requests for scheduled broadcasts, which did not leave a sufficient number available for general searching and recording of unscheduled programmes. Delays further occurred in reporting the recorded bulletins, due to the necessity of transporting the cylinders to the listening room. Moreover, the engineers warned that shortages in equipment, which meant the machinery was all in constant use, had resulted in failures that would only increase as the machines aged. In order to address these problems it was decided to start recording any item of potential value immediately, as the recording could always be stopped once a monitor had been found. As the chief engineer stated: 'the small fraction of a record wasted by this procedure is considered to be unimportant compared with the possible value of the initial words of suspected broadcasts.' Richard Marriott further suggested that monitors be provided with additional simple domestic receivers. Although not immediately implemented, this suggestion resulted in monitors tuning in their own sets, for the majority of signals that could be received on such domestic receivers, in the following year.²⁵

Furthermore, it was found that monitors' reports, frequently composed by newly arrived refugees to Britain, had to be checked and corrected for grammar and

²³ Olive Renier & Vladimir Rubinstein, *Assigned to Listen: the Evesham experience, 1939-43* (London: BBC External Services, 1986), pp.20-22; 45. The equipment provided was identical to the minimum recommendations of a pre-war estimate, 18 Apr. 1939, BBC:WAC E2/409/1.

²⁴ Radio Nacional (Spain): News in Spanish: 15.25 1 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MST C382; Stuttgart (Germany): News in French: 20.30 2 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MST E1.

²⁵ L.W. Hayes, 'Radio Interception and Monitoring at Wood Norton', 9 Sep. 1939, BBC:WAC E2/409/1; Renier & Rubinstein, p.20.

spelling, prior to being teleprinted to London. Senior Monitoring Service staff stationed at Wood Norton, such as Oliver Whitley and David Hallett, thus undertook to edit all monitors' reports before passing them on for teleprinting. Due to the limited number of teleprinters, supervisors also shortened monitors' reports as much as possible in preparation for transmission. This consisted of using standardised abbreviations and removing superfluous words, particularly the article. The resultant style was known as 'telegraphese'.²⁶ The following transcript, from 1 September 1939, illustrates how supervisors shortened monitors' reports:

~~'It was~~ made known to-day ~~that~~ Hitler has taken over almost ~~the~~ entire conduct of foreign policy and ~~that he~~ has worked day and night at ~~the~~ present problems for ~~more than~~ ^(over) a week.'²⁷

In addition to these duties, Wood Norton supervisors also crossed out or 'spiked' certain items or passages, which they did not think were important enough to teleprint to London. Once monitors' reports had been checked, they were passed to typists, trained in the use of teleprinters, who would send everything directly to Broadcasting House in London, where the Digest was compiled by the BBC Overseas Intelligence department. Reports were thus edited twice at this stage in the Service's history: firstly by supervisors at Wood Norton, and then again in London, where the main selection and distribution of monitored material took place.²⁸

Collection Priorities

During the first three weeks of the Monitoring Service's history, the number of monitors employed to report bulletins was at its smallest in the Service's history and the size of the Digest was at its shortest. The Monitoring Service therefore had to be the most selective in its history when deciding what type of broadcast content to report from the large number of transmissions receivable. The collected monitors' transcripts from this period thus only represent a small

²⁶ Memo on Editing, 28 May 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

²⁷ Wayne (America): News in English: 03.30 1 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MST N67.

²⁸ Monitor's written or typed transcripts were edited and initialled in pen. (IWM BBC MST.)

proportion of the broadcasts originally listened to by monitors, and an even smaller proportion of all those receivable. There is little remaining documentation from this period, which relates to any specific requests from consumers.²⁹ An analysis and comparison of monitors' transcripts and the edited Digests from this period, however, makes it possible to glimpse which types of transmissions, and what type of information, Monitoring Service employees decided to pass on to their consumers.

Arrangement of the Digest

The document of edited monitors' transcripts, which was distributed to consumers, was initially entitled 'Digest of Foreign Broadcasts', but was renamed, 'Digest of News Bulletins from Foreign Stations', on 8 September. It was renamed again, the 'Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts', on 2 November 1939. The first Digest was produced on 28 August 1939, but production quickly switched, after two days, to twice daily publication. From 1 September, after several slight variations, the first daily publication covered bulletins broadcast between 16.00 BST and 08.00 BST that morning, and the second publication covered bulletins broadcast between 08.00 BST and 16.00 BST. Items within the Digest were always listed according to the country of origin of the broadcast, and soon came to be divided, within this, by broadcasting language and broadcast destination. The ordering of these sections within the Digest, however, was initially prone to daily alteration.³⁰ This changing arrangement of items within the Digest, as well as the proportion of space devoted to broadcasts from different countries, offers to provide an indication as to BBC Monitoring's perception of the importance of different types of transmissions to their consumers.

The main alteration in the positioning of items, during this period, was that American broadcasts were initially placed first in the Digest, whereas after 8 September, German broadcasts were often listed first. This initial interest in the importance of broadcasting from the United States can be put down to two

²⁹ See chapter three for an account of requests received from Monitoring Service consumers.

³⁰ IWM: BBC MSD 1 & 2.

factors. Firstly, Monitoring employees saw the reaction of America to the situation in Poland as important in indicating whether the country was likely to take any action against Germany, or make any offer to help the Allied powers if war should break out. An indication of this reason for placing importance on American broadcasting can be seen in the Digest for 29 – 30 August, which included, as the first item, a general summary of American news in English:

The general tone is one of sympathy for Great Britain and France and of confidence in the determination of these two countries in the present crisis.³¹

Another reason for the prominence given to broadcasting from American stations, for the first ten days of the Monitoring Service's history, was due to its value as a source of news and information. This was partly because, due to time differences, the American stations broadcast news as it was coming in, when it was the middle of the night in Britain. The Digest for 1 September included a news flash issued from the American station Wayne that Mussolini had proposed a five-power peace conference.³² More importantly, American radio broadcast reports sent in from American correspondents stationed within Europe, who had witnessed events at first hand. The Digest for 5 September included a report from an American correspondent who had witnessed German air raids on the Warsaw suburbs. The report included the details that the raid had been conducted by 30 bombers, who had dropped 5000 pounds of explosives, from a height of 1300 feet, and also that three of the bombers had been shot down.³³

The trend from 8 September, to place German broadcasts first in the Digest, indicated both the decreased importance placed on American broadcasting, after their intention to remain neutral had been confirmed, and a shift in focus towards monitoring Germany's actions. This trend towards increasing emphasis on Germany fits in with the subsequent decision, taken in early October 1939, to divide the Daily Digest into two parts according to the originating country of monitored broadcasts, rather than the time of transmission. From October 1939,

³¹ Digest, 29/30 Aug. 1939, IWM: BBC MSD 1.

³² Digest, 1 Sep. 1939 (04.00 – 12.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1.

³³ W2XE (America): Press Association in English: 12.50 5 Sep. 1939, Digest, 5 Sep. 1939 (08.00 – 16.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1.

the whole of part one of the Digest was devoted to reporting transmissions from German and German-occupied territory, whereas part two, covered broadcasting from all other countries.³⁴

Although the order of items in the Digest was still prone to alterations from issue to issue, a table of contents was added to the Digest from 13 September, which set out the order in which broadcasts were reported according to their country of origin, so that consumers could more readily locate those transmissions they were most interested in. An effort was also made on this date to sort the reporting of broadcasts originating from a certain country into sub-sections, according to the broadcasts' language or intended destination.³⁵

The increased importance placed on broadcasting from Germany by BBC Monitoring was also indicated by the proportion of space devoted to covering these transmissions in the Digest. Coverage of German stations grew fairly constantly throughout the first two weeks of September; both in the number of transcripts originally made by monitors and in the number of these included in the Digest. The proportion of space devoted to reporting German broadcasting in the Digest also increased considerably, compared to other countries outputs. In contrast, coverage of American stations relatively declined in the first days following the initial declarations of war by Britain and France, even though it was not until 8 September that these transmissions stopped being reported first.

Coverage of Italian stations was fairly constant, in the number both originally monitored and included in the Digest, but there was a fairly noticeable decline in the proportion of the Digest that they occupied, as the size of the document grew. This was perhaps, like America, due to their position of neutrality. There was some growth in the coverage of French broadcasting, about in proportion to the growing size of the Digest. There was also a small but noticeable growth in the

³⁴ Joint meeting of the Planning and Broadcasting Committees (JPBC), 2 Oct. 1939, TNA FO 898/7.

³⁵ See Appendix 3 for a list of the table of contents for 13 and 17 September 1939.

coverage of other countries, including Spain, Eire, Holland and Belgium, for which only one or two broadcasts a day were included in the Digest.³⁶

The number of broadcasts emanating from the USSR included in the Digest was surprisingly low. This reflected the number of broadcasts originally monitored at Wood Norton, for which few transcripts from this period remain. The fact that there was relatively little coverage of Soviet broadcasting may not be due to an assessment of its relatively lesser importance than Italy, for example, but due to difficulties in picking up these signals, or due to the lack of availability of Russian speaking staff at Wood Norton for the monitoring of home transmissions. There does, however, appear to have been a relative neglect of Russian broadcasting, given the strategic importance of the Soviet Union. It was not until 27 September 1939 – ten days after the Soviet Union had entered Poland – that the Monitoring Service was asked to monitor Russian broadcasts in Russian and Romanian by the MoI, although they had previously monitored several of these transmissions on their own initiative at the outbreak of war.³⁷

One reason for the neglect of Russian broadcasting by BBC Monitoring was because employees appeared to consider the only value of these transmissions as being to indicate official Soviet attitudes or intentions. That this was the perspective from which monitors reported Soviet broadcasts was made explicit in 2/3 September Digest:

The bulletin gave no indication of the Russian attitude to the international situation. It included formal reports of the Polish appeal to France and Roosevelt's appeal about civilian bombing.³⁸

The flat style of reporting of news items on Soviet radio, which appeared to give little indication as to official views, seems to have convinced Monitoring Service employees that the transmissions were of little value. On 4 September, a Russian

³⁶ IWM: BBC MSD 1 & 2.

³⁷ Memo from J.B. Clark, 27 Sep. 1939, BBC: WAC E2/405/1.

³⁸ Moscow (Soviet Union): 16.00 2 Sep. 1939, Digest, 2/3 Sep. 1939 (16.00 – 08.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1.

broadcast from Moscow was again reported from this perspective: 'Various other items from belligerent states indicate no prejudices or propagandist tendencies.'³⁹

Further reflecting the increased importance placed on Germany and German actions in September 1939, the Service commenced the monitoring of Polish stations on 4 September. Coverage of these stations was conducted in order to find out information about the military situation within Poland. A broadcast included in 4 September Digest, reported military items, including the news that the Polish cavalry had broken the German front between Leszno and Rawicz and advanced ten miles into east Prussia.⁴⁰ As German forces advanced into Poland they took control of many previously Polish radio transmitters, and did not always announce the changeover in control when they began broadcasting again to the Polish population.⁴¹ Reports from Vilna in Polish, stating that Warsaw was in German hands, were included in the 10 September Digest. It was stated in the Digest, however, that officials at the Polish Embassy had confirmed a broadcast purporting to come from Warsaw, issued the same day, was undoubtedly a camouflaged German station.⁴² The fake German claim to have captured Warsaw was cited as an example, by the MoI, of '[t]he obvious lying indulged in by German propaganda'.⁴³ Warsaw did not finally surrender until 27 September.⁴⁴

The desire to work out the originating broadcast country of a transmission, combined with the valuable military intelligence that could be drawn from broadcasting behavior, led to a separate technical supplement being added to the

³⁹ Moscow (Soviet Union): News in Russian: 21.30 3 Sep. 1939, Digest, 3/4 Sep. 1939 (16.00 – 08.00), IWM BBC MSD 1.

⁴⁰ Warsaw (Poland): in Polish: 23.00 3 Sep. 1939, Digest, 3/4 Sep. 1939 (16.00 – 08.00), IWM BBC MSD 1.

⁴¹ Warsaw I (Operated by Germany): in Polish: 09.41 (and 10.15; 17.30) 10 Sep. 1939, Digest, 9/10 Sep. 1939 (16.00 – 08.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1.

⁴² Vilna (Poland): In Polish to Polish Listeners: 20.45 9 Sep. 1939; Vilna & Baranowicze (Poland): In Polish for Polish listeners: 21.25 9 Sep. 1939; Warsaw (Poland), In English: 01.00 10 Sep. 1939, all in Digest, 9/10 Sep. 1939 (16.00 – 08.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1. Transcripts in IWM: BBC MST E83.

⁴³ 'Propaganda: An Appreciation of Action Taken and its Effect', 17 Sep. 1939 – 21 Sep. 1939, TNA CAB 68/1/15.

⁴⁴ R.A.C. Parker, *The Second World War: A Short History* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2001), p.22.

Digest from 13 September 1939.⁴⁵ This section, prepared by BBC engineers, was added daily to the first part of the Digest, covering broadcasts transmitted between 08.00 and 16.00 BST. It focused, due to the military situation, on broadcasts originating from Germany and Poland. However, other countries' broadcasting was also mentioned on occasion, including Russia on 15 September and Latvia on 17 September.⁴⁶ These supplements, which were one to two pages long, included information such as wavelength and frequency changes, and the times that certain transmitters were in operation, as well as whether any broadcasts had been blocked. In regard to Poland, implications were also drawn from the technical information, to assess whether the information indicated a particular transmitter was being controlled by Poland or Germany. The first technical supplement included, of previously Polish transmitters, that: '[t]hese have definite signs of frequency modulation which the true Polish stations have not previously exhibited.'⁴⁷ Technical data was thus used, when possible, to help assess or validate reports of questionable veracity.

Content

The type of items regularly reported by monitors, and regularly included in the Digest by editors, provide an indication of the information that was regarded, by BBC Monitoring employees, as most important to record for their consumers.

News items relating to the military situation were reported throughout this period. German broadcasts regarding safe shipping areas for merchant vessels, and the locations where mines had been laid, were a particular priority, as demonstrated by the special care taken to report such items accurately. A report from Zeesen, which provided the locations of danger zones, limited waters and points where mines had been laid, was teleprinted twice from Wood Norton on 4 September. A note attached to the second copy of the monitor's transcript stated that the item had been: 'checked again at request of Broadcasting House and sent

⁴⁵ The first technical supplement included material gathered 11 & 12 Sept. and was included in Digest, 12/13 Sep. 1939 (16.00 – 08.00). From 14 September, supplement was included in Digest (08.00 – 16.00), based on observations made that day, IWM: BBC MSD 1 & 2.

⁴⁶ Digest, 15 Sep. 1939 (08.00 – 16.00); Digest, 17 Sep. 1939 (08.00 – 16.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1 & 2.

⁴⁷ Digest, 13 Sep. 1939 (16.00 – 08.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1.

to Woburn'.⁴⁸ Woburn referred to Woburn Abbey, the wartime base of Department EH. Official communiqués were frequently included in the Digest, such as a communiqué issued by the Polish envoy on 29 August, proclaiming that the German occupation of Slovakia was an act of aggression against Poland.⁴⁹

There is a small amount of evidence in the remaining BBCM transcripts from this period that individual consumers had already begun to shape the output of the Service. A monitor's transcript for a report from Zeesen on 6 September, which consisted of an account of an official German White Book on the last phase of the German-Polish crisis, contained a note from a monitoring supervisor. This stated that one section of the report had been monitored verbatim at the request of Department EH.⁵⁰

Apart from these specific items, bulletins were frequently reported with the aim of providing an indication of broadcasting trends, or the political alignment of the broadcasting nation, rather than to relay specific items of broadcast news. For instance, a five-minute report from an American correspondent in Berlin on 31 August was summarised by the monitor, not by giving the contents of the talk, but by providing a judgement on its tone and significance: 'He [the commentator] strikes a note of very restrained optimism.'⁵¹ An Italian broadcast from Rome was reported in the Digest with the statement: 'The German version of diplomatic events of the last few days is given'.⁵² A broadcast from Spain was reported as, 'objective news items' and one from Portugal as: 'This bulletin summarised the events of the day in an objective manner, giving full weight to the Polish-British points of view.'⁵³ Broadcasts from Japan and China were rarely monitored, due to reception difficulties, but when the Monitoring Service received them, they too tended to be reported with a view to discerning the

⁴⁸ Zeesen (Germany): News in English: 13.50 4 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MST A1.

⁴⁹ WNBI (America): News in English: 22.00 29 Aug. 1939, Digest, 29/30 Aug. 1939, IWM: BBC MSD 1.

⁵⁰ Zeesen (Germany): 04.30 6 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MST A1.

⁵¹ Wayne (America): News in English: 12.00 31 Aug. 1939, IWM: BBC MST N67.

⁵² Rome (Italy): News in Italian: 12.00 1 Sep. 1939, Digest, 1/2 Sep. 1939 (16.00 – 08.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1.

⁵³ Spanish news for Spain, Digest, 29/30 Aug. 1939; Lisbon (Portugal): in Portuguese: 20.10 1 Sep. 1939, Digest, 1/2 Sep. 1939 (16.00 – 08.00), IWM BBC MSD 1.

nations' attitude towards the war in Europe. A report of a broadcast from China on 8 September stated: 'This is mostly news of local fighting in the Far East and a warning to European powers to beware of 'Japanese unfriendly neutrality''.⁵⁴ A Japanese broadcast on the same day was also reported in the Digest as: 'The Japanese interpretation of details of Far Eastern events takes up a great part of this bulletin.'⁵⁵ Even when the news items in a bulletin were reported in full in the Digest, they were sometimes arranged according to their assumed intention. For a German broadcast in Arabic on 29 August, the news items broadcast were arranged under a number of sub-headings, including: 'Items suggesting weakness of anti-Axis powers', 'Poland represented as aggressor' and 'Polish atrocities'.⁵⁶

The first page of the Digest for 1 September included a disclaimer as to the collection priorities of the Monitoring Service:

The digest has been issued under emergency conditions. It does not attempt to cover the main items which can be assumed to be generally known. News items not obviously falling under this head have been included as far as possible, as well as indications or reactions and comments.⁵⁷

This note was rephrased for the following Digest, so as to not appear to exclude the reporting of major news stories:

The Digest, produced under emergency conditions, does not aim at covering all the contents of the news bulletins with any completeness. Items are selected with a view to their possible news value or as indications of political reactions and tendencies.⁵⁸

The bias towards the reporting of new items of news, or indications of new political or military developments, as indicated in the first disclaimer, is evident in the transcript and Digest reports from this time. When reporting major news stories, the details of such items were either not given or were given when the

⁵⁴ Hunang (China): in English: 23.00 8 Sep. 1939, Digest, 9 Sep. 1939 (08.00 – 16.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1.

⁵⁵ Japan: in English: 20.00 8 Sep. 1939, Digest, 9 Sep. 1939 (08.00 – 16.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1.

⁵⁶ Zeesen (Germany): News in Arabic: 17.45 29 Aug. 1939, Digest, 29/30 Aug. 1939, IWM: BBC MSD 1.

⁵⁷ Digest, 1 Sep. 1939 (04.00 – 12.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1.

⁵⁸ Digest, 1/2 Sep. 1939 (16.00 – 08.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1.

story was first reported in the Digest and afterwards only referred to in summary. In other words, Monitoring employees assumed, rightly or wrongly, that their readers kept up to date with major news developments and did not need to be reminded of the details of these. An example of this was the reporting of items bearing some relation on America's position of neutrality. These made up a large proportion of items monitored during the first few days of the Service's history. Much attention was given to the speech made by President Roosevelt at the outbreak of war, and to items that considered its implications for international affairs.⁵⁹ After several days, however, the main issues of the debate were taken for granted, and monitors stopped recounting the exact content of these items. A report on 6 September thus declared: 'The commentator gave an explanation of the implications of the old and new neutrality laws of the United States.'⁶⁰ Another example of this practice was the summarising of relevant items as 'Polish atrocities' or 'usual atrocity stories'.⁶¹

BBC Monitoring's reluctance to report main news stories in verbatim may have been due to the fact they knew their consumers would have access to news agency reports that already provided such details. In fact in May 1940, guidelines for supervisors set down which agency messages could be assumed to be known in London and which could not.⁶² It was recognised by some within the Service in September 1939, however, that the selection of news items actually chosen for broadcast to different audiences had potential significance. A report of an Italian broadcast in Arabic thus included only those news stories peculiar to that transmission:

General tone rather colourless and consists chiefly of bare recitation of events in various countries. The following are items specifically addressed to the Arabs: denied from Ankara that general mobilisation ordered in Turkey...⁶³

⁵⁹ Wayne (America): in English: 03.00 4 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MST N67.

⁶⁰ Wayne (America): News in English: 14.00 6 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MST N67.

⁶¹ Zeesen (Germany): News in Arabic: 17.45 29 Aug. 1939, Digest, 29/30 Aug. 1939, IWM: BBC MSD 1; Cologne (Germany): News in German: 20.00 & 22.00 30 Aug. 1939, Digest, 31 Aug. 1939 (00.00 – 15.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1.

⁶² Memo on Editing, 28 May 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

⁶³ Rome (Italy): News in Arabic: 18.30 1 Sep. 1939, Digest, 1/2 Sep. 1939 (16.00 – 08.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1.

Monitoring also tracked how different nation's reported individual major news stories to different audiences, if there were major deviations in this. Two such items, which both represented a battle for international public opinion during this period, were the bombing of open towns and the sinking of the *Athenia*.

On 1 September 1939, as the German Army invaded Poland by land, the Luftwaffe carried out intensive air raids over Polish cities, including Warsaw.⁶⁴ The raids on Warsaw continued over the following days, despite President Roosevelt's radio appeal to the belligerent parties on 1 September to stop the bombing of unfortified towns and civilians. British, French, Polish and American stations consistently reported the raids, whereas German radio repeatedly denied the allegation levelled against them by international broadcasters: that of committing the 'first military atrocity' of the war.⁶⁵

The *Athenia* was an ocean liner, carrying 1500 passengers from Liverpool to Montreal, which was mistakenly torpedoed by a German U-30 submarine on 3 September, resulting in the death of 128 people, 28 of them American. It was the first British ship to be sunk by Nazi Germany.⁶⁶ The story of the sinking of the *Athenia* was carefully tracked in the Daily Digest from the outset. The first three pages of the Digest covering the period from 08.00 – 16.00 on 4 September were particularly devoted to reporting American station's comments on the sinking. This despite the fact American President, Franklin Roosevelt, had broadcast to the American people discouraging talk of American engagement in the war, and declaring that a proclamation of American neutrality was being prepared.⁶⁷ The German decision to deny the attack on *Athenia* prolonged the issue, as the British press issued evidence to prove the attack had occurred, which was subsequently reported in broadcasts from around the world.⁶⁸ The first survey of German propaganda, issued by the MoI two weeks after the attack, and based partly on

⁶⁴ Prażmowska, p.174.

⁶⁵ Cologne (Germany): News in German: 14.00 1 Sep. 1939, Digest, 1/2 Sep. 1939 (16.00 – 08.00); Zeesen (Germany): News in German for Africa: 22.00 2 Sep. 1939, Digest, 2/3 Sep. 1939 (16.00 – 08.00); Zeesen (Germany): News in English: 02.00 3 Sep. 1939, Digest, 2/3 Sep. 1939 (16.00 – 08.00), all in IWM: BBC MSD 1.

⁶⁶ Overy, 1939, pp.107-108.

⁶⁷ Digest, 4 Sep. 1939 (08.00 – 16.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1.

⁶⁸ W2XE (America): News in English: 13.45 6 Sep. 1939, Digest, 6/7 Sep. 1939 (16.00 – 08.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1.

BBC Monitoring, further related coverage of the Athenia incident to American reaction. The report stated that the tone and volume of German coverage of the incident had shown 'evidence of acute sensitiveness to American reactions.'⁶⁹

In contrast to these major news items, an analysis of monitors' transcripts, and comparison of monitors' transcripts with copies of the Digests, further reveals what types of news or information BBC Monitoring did not consider worth reporting to consumers.

Firstly news that had already been reported in other broadcasts was frequently not teleprinted to London, or included in the Digest, if identified as such. An item about a Dutch steamer, which was due to set sail to New York, was not included in the Digest report of a broadcast from Wayne on 30 August, having already been reported from other transmissions.⁷⁰ A news bulletin in Italian from Wayne on 2 September, which included several items concerning French policy, was also not teleprinted verbatim from Wood Norton. The supervisor instead sent the phrase, 'Other French news as in previous bulletins'.⁷¹

Secondly, reflecting the assumption of the Monitoring Service that they were to look out for indications of a nation's attitude to the international situation, monitors and editors did not regard domestic news as important to report during this period. The monitor covering a broadcast from Lisbon in Portuguese, on 12 September, added the note to their report: 'One half record of Portuguese home news'.⁷² A report of a broadcast from Spain on 15 September similarly contained the summary that: 'Entire bulletin made up of local news such as Franco's visit to Galicia etc. Not a single item or comment on international situation.'⁷³ News items regarding events in Britain were also omitted from reports by both monitoring supervisors and editors. One item reported on 30 August, stating that 'The Bank of London was closed today', was crossed out of

⁶⁹ Survey of German propaganda during the first fortnight of the war, 22 Sep. 1939, TNA CAB 68/1/17.

⁷⁰ Wayne (America): News in English: 13.30 30 Aug. 1939, IWM: BBC MST N67.

⁷¹ W2XE (America): News in Italian: 02.50 2 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MST N67.

⁷² Lisbon (Portugal): News in Portuguese: 01.00 12 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MST E104.

⁷³ Radio Nacional (Madrid): News in Spanish for Latin America: 01.25 15 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MST C382.

a monitor's report and not teleprinted to London.⁷⁴ Similarly, an item in a German report on 1 September, which stated that the British fleet had mobilised, was not teleprinted to London.⁷⁵

Reports of a propaganda nature that had a bearing on Britain's international image were, however, reported in the Digest. On 10 September, the Digest included the following note:

It is perhaps worth noting that the vehement denials of German responsibility for the sinking of the 'Athenia' continue to be broadcast in every language from Germany, together with the most violent and scurrilous attacks on Mr Churchill⁷⁶

A report submitted by the MoI, covering the first two weeks of the war, still proclaimed the pre-war message that BBC Monitoring had been instituted, on behalf of the MoI Collection Division, to: 'enable enemy propaganda to be countered'.⁷⁷ Although there was dispute, between government departments, over how best to counter such enemy propaganda, it is clear from the records BBC Monitoring left behind from this period that they regarded it as their duty to record any news or propaganda unfavourable to Britain or key British personalities.

Daily Notes

The arrangement of the Digest, into categories according to the geographic origin of the broadcast, was easy to compile for sub-editors and suited consumers who were only interested in particular countries' broadcasting. It was not, however, a useful arrangement for those interested in how a particular event or item of news had been treated by different countries, or for those only interested in the most important broadcasting developments of the day. In order to meet the requirements of a wider number of consumers, particularly those who did not

⁷⁴ Wayne (America): News in English: 13.30 30 Aug. 1939, IWM: BBC MST N67.

⁷⁵ Zeesen (Germany): in English: 00.00 1 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MST A1. (Item teleprinted at 07.35)

⁷⁶ Digest, 9/10 Sep. 1939 (16.00 – 08.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1.

⁷⁷ 'Propaganda: An Appreciation of Action Taken and its Effect', 21 Sep. 1939, TNA CAB 68/1/15.

have the time to read the whole Digest, the innovation of a separate general notes section was developed. This sought to provide an overview of the most important items and trends broadcast that day. The forerunner of the Monitoring Report, these 'Daily Notes' were soon placed at the beginning of the first part of the Digest, and had developed into a separate document by January 1940.⁷⁸

On 4 September, a general note on broadcasts from Germany was included at the beginning of that section, under the heading: 'General Impression'.

The main trend of the news bulletins broadcast from German stations on the 4th September is to lay the blame of the war on Great Britain. Attempts of driving a wedge between England and France can also be noted.⁷⁹

A general note of this type was not repeated in the following Digest, and it was not until the 13 September that such notes became a regular feature of the document. On occasion these notes went beyond identifying broadcast trends and also sought to draw conclusions about what these trends indicated, as in the final paragraph of 13 September Daily Note:

Items warning the Poles that they must realise their responsibility for "future brutalities" to German troops in the occupied territory may indicate that the German authorities are having difficulties with the Polish population.⁸⁰

The same Digest also contained a short general note on Italian broadcasting, and the Digest for 16 September included a small note on broadcasting from France. The note on French broadcasting commented that, although several bulletins had noted a change in the Soviet attitude towards Poland, these transmissions dismissed the idea of a secret agreement between Germany and Russia, involving the mutual partition of Poland, on the grounds that the USSR would not want a common border with Germany.⁸¹ The following day Soviet troops did march into Poland, claiming that the Polish state had already disintegrated and that they

⁷⁸ Letter Air Chief Marshal to MSeX, 2 Feb. 1940, BBC:WAC E2/409/1; IWM: BBC MSD.

⁷⁹ Digest, 4 Sep. 1939 (08.00 – 16.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1.

⁸⁰ Digest, 13 Sep. 1939 (16.00 – 08.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1.

⁸¹ Digest, 15/16 Sep. 1939 (16.00 – 08.00), IWM: BBC MSD 2.

were thus acting to protect Ukrainian and White Russians living within Poland.⁸² This note by the Monitoring Service, so close to the invasion, indicates that they had identified a Soviet invasion as a real possibility and one of high priority for their consumers to be informed about.

On 18 September, these notes of different countries' broadcasting were all grouped together for the first time at the beginning of the Digest. Along with a note on broadcasting from German and Italian stations, this Digest also contained several small sections covering broadcasting from Russia and USA.⁸³ Although undeveloped during this period, these Daily Notes provided both a survey of broadcast or propaganda trends and highlighted any broadcast items indicative of important political or military developments.

Reporting Style

Academic studies of intelligence rarely identify the style in which reports are written, or should be written, as a significant factor in the intelligence process. Recent literature that has sought to acknowledge the impact of the 'human factor', or more precisely the 'individual biases' or 'culture' that individuals bring to their task, has focused on the role of the intelligence analyst or consumer.⁸⁴ Intelligence analysts, by definition, are meant to interpret and analyse information. The actual style of intelligence reports thus presents less of a problem, for these theorists, than the analysts' cognitive approach, which they have sought to describe and improve.⁸⁵ In collection, however, style is more important, because collection agencies are not meant to analyse and interpret information.

⁸² Telegram German Ambassador, Soviet Union to German Foreign Office, 19 Sep. 1939, Avalon project: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/ns073.asp, 6 Dec. 2011.

⁸³ Digest, 17/18 Sep. 1939 (16.00 – 08.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1.

⁸⁴ William E Odom, 'Intelligence Analysis', *Intelligence and National Security* 23:3 (2008), pp.316-332; Christopher Andrew, 'Intelligence, International Relations and 'Under-theorisation'', *Intelligence and National Security* 19:2 (2004), pp.170-184; Adam N. Shulsky & Gary J. Schmitt, *Silent Warfare: Understanding the World of Intelligence*, 3rd ed. (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2002), pp.72-73.

⁸⁵ Richard Immerman has, however, testified to the fact that new recommendations for the composition of intelligence reports have come into force within the US Intelligence Community since 2007, by which all sources must now be cited. (Richard H. Immerman, 'Transforming Analysis: The Intelligence Community's Best Kept Secret', *Intelligence and National Security* 26:2-3 (2011), p.170.)

In an article examining the impact of discourse failure in the intelligence process, Hatlebrekke and Smith thus merely state of the collection operator that they: ‘must avoid interpretation or indeed analysis of the information that is collected.’⁸⁶ This study, however, has shown that Monitoring Service employees, both monitors and editors, could to some extent not avoid interpretation and analysis of the material. If their reports were meant to conceal this prior interpretation and analysis from intelligent analysts and consumers, then the style of their reports was clearly critical. This very approach was actually advocated in 1939 when Digest sub-editors were instructed to: ‘make sure their comment [was] implied, rather than explicit’.⁸⁷

Research on collection agencies themselves has also failed to focus on style. This is generally because it has been seen as an administrative issue, and thus as a less exciting aspect of these institutions’ history, than for instance code breaking or agent fielding. Two studies on Bletchley Park during the Second World War, have, however, begun to explore the impact of these neglected facets of the intelligence process. Rodney Brunt has studied the development of special documentation systems at Bletchley, and Hilary Footitt has examined the role of translation in the production of decrypt reports. A co-authored article by Rodney Brunt and A. Black on information management at MI5 before the age of the computer is another notable contribution to opening the field.⁸⁸

As far as the Monitoring Service itself is concerned, an examination of reporting style is not just a neglected facet of the organisation, it is also a way to explore the developing operation and working assumptions of the Service throughout the war. An analysis of the divergent reporting styles used by monitors and editors

⁸⁶ Kjetill Anders Hatlebrekke & M. L. R. Smith, ‘Towards a New Theory of Intelligence Failure? The Impact of Cognitive Closure and Discourse Failure’, *Intelligence and National Security* 25:2 (2010), p.163.

⁸⁷ Letter J. L. Lawrence to Monitoring Service, 15 Nov. 1939, BBC: WAC E2/411.

⁸⁸ Hilary Footitt, ‘Another Missing Dimension? Foreign Languages in World War II Intelligence’, *Intelligence and National Security* 25:3 (2010), pp.271-289; Rodney M. Brunt, ‘Special documentation systems of the Government Code and Cypher School, Bletchley park, during the Second World War’, *Intelligence and National Security* 21:1 (2007), pp.129-148; A. Black & M. Brunt, ‘Information Management in MI5 Before the Age of the Computer’, *Intelligence and National Security* 16:2 (2001), pp.158-165.

can indicate the individual employees' perceived value of different types of broadcast to Monitoring consumers. In so doing it establishes the impact that the individual had on the reports produced by BBCM. At the very beginning of the war there were no official guidelines for monitors and editors, as to the style in which reports should be composed. Tracking the reporting style used by Monitoring employees throughout the war, by means of these case study chapters, can thus further reveal the extent to which the introduction of official guidelines and procedures limited the individuals' impact on the material that reached consumers. It can also crucially identify those areas that remained dependent on individual judgement.

In order to discuss the reporting styles adopted by BBC Monitoring employees, the following categories will be used for both this, and subsequent case study chapters:

<u>Content</u>	<u>Style</u>	
	Direct	Indirect
Full Content	Verbatim or translated verbatim, if the broadcast was not originally in English.	Description of all content in an indirect style.
Summary	Content may be left out, but reads how it was broadcast, i.e. as though reported verbatim.	Indirect, descriptive style, as above, but all the information included in the original broadcast was not reported.

The direct style of reporting is illustrated in the following extract from a monitor's report of a broadcast from Zeesen, prior to the outbreak of war:

British women and children arrived in Ireland. Women claimed in event of war Ireland would be the only safe place.⁸⁹

This style of reporting had the advantage of allowing consumers to draw their own conclusions about the broadcast. The monitor could - as other monitors did for similar items - have drawn out the possible intention, which lay behind the decision to broadcast the item, or could have dismissed it simply as 'defeatist propaganda'. However, the item was multifaceted and open to multiple interpretations. It could have been intended to suggest that British citizens thought England would lose the war; that Britain was not safe; or that in the event of war Ireland would remain neutral. This style of reporting, although still involving the subjective process of translation, enabled the consumer to consider the different facets of the item, whilst minimising the impact of the monitor's own subjective assessment as to its relevance.

It was not always made clear when monitors reported in a direct style - as in this case - whether they were reporting the item in full or in summary, or only reporting an extract from the report. Attempts were made by some monitors and monitoring supervisors to indicate the style in which the broadcast had been reported. One monitor added the note, 'not verbatim', to the end of their report, and a monitoring supervisor added the words, 'Extract from' to a report of a bulletin from Stuttgart.⁹⁰

The indirect style of reporting was not always used during this period in order to summarise or reduce the size of a report. Editors changed the style of monitors' reports, on occasion, without changing or omitting any of the original informational content. A monitor's report of a talk broadcast from Germany began by stating, 'The following is an excerpt from a brief talk in the middle of a concert', and then proceeded to report the relevant extract directly. It appeared

⁸⁹ Zeesen (Germany): in German: 14.00 30 Aug. 1939, IWM: BBC MST A161.

⁹⁰ Frankfurt (Germany): News in French: 02.00 6 Sep. 1939; Stuttgart (Germany): News in French: 20.30 2 Sep. 1939, both IWM: BBC MST E1.

in the Digest, after editing, in an indirect, descriptive style: 'In the course of a brief talk in the middle of a concert, it was stated that all reports...' ⁹¹

On occasion monitors and editors used a mixed style of reporting within a single report. The start of a news bulletin from Germany in French was reported in an indirect style: 'Points in Chamberlain's speech regarding German initiative in attacking Poland described as "pure invention".' The next three sentences of the report then stated in a direct style what was broadcast:

Reich convinced of justice of cause. Flame is thrown on Poland for encouraging frontier incidents and world opinion will take Germanys side. Most of World is already upholding Germanys conduct, as is proved by large number of neutral countries.

The fifth sentence of the report then reverted back to the first indirect style: 'Poland is accused of megalomania, and England blamed for encouraging it.' ⁹²

Although there was no consistency during this period, by which news bulletins were reported in one style and talks were reported in another, the indirect style of reporting was used, in the majority of cases, for summarising material. One monitor who covered a large number of the bulletins from Spain consistently reported in this style:

Foreign news very extensive... No commentary, no visible bias. Slight prevalence of news from Berlin and Rome. ⁹³

More extensive than afternoon bulletin in Spanish. Bias for Germany more marked... Propaganda news from Berlin in between other news. ⁹⁴

The problems with summarising material are well illustrated by these extracts. On the one hand the summary expressed the monitor's judgement as to what the consumer(s) who read the report would be interested in, meaning that news content of possible value to consumers was left out. In this case the monitor has

⁹¹ Cologne (Germany): News in German: 17.10 30 Aug. 1939, IWM: BBC MST A161. Appears as 18.10 in Digest, 30 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MSD 1.

⁹² Stuttgart (Germany): News in French: 3 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MST E1.

⁹³ Burgos (Spain): News in Spanish: 14.30 12 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MST C382.

⁹⁴ Burgos (Spain): News in Italian: 21.15 11 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MST C1.

focused on the question of Spanish neutrality, and decided consumers would only be interested in the bulletins as an indication of Spain's attitude towards the war. This style of reporting also meant that consumers had to trust the monitor's judgement about what they had heard - in this case whether or not the bulletins had shown bias - for the material was not there for consumers to make their own judgement. Comparing monitors' and editors' reports of the same bulletin illustrates that summarisation could be misleading, on occasion. For one broadcast in Italian from Rome on 5 September, the editor summarised the monitor's report to read: 'Propaganda unfavourable to Poland, England and France.' The eventual affect of the broadcast may have been propaganda, however, the transcript itself only recounted selected news items unfavourable to those countries, e.g. 'British plane shot down in combat', '11 Polish planes shot down.'⁹⁵ There is and was much debate as to the definition of propaganda but in this case the word propaganda, to encapsulate the entire broadcast and its contents, seems uninformative.

Summarisation was, however, used in these cases to avoid repeating material similar to that which had already been reported from other broadcasts, because there were no standardised procedures during this period for reporting news items that were repeats of earlier reported items.

If the main difficulty with summarisation was that it depended on monitors' and editors' subjective judgement, then the indirect style of reporting only made this prior judgement of the material more explicit to consumers. Monitoring employees were, however, immersed in the broadcasting output of particular regions, countries and stations, and did have valuable contextual information to impart to consumers. Such information was sometimes included in separate notes, attached to the main report of the bulletin.

An editor added a note to his summary of a report entitled, 'Why was the Fuehrer kept waiting?': 'This message was more circumstantial than previous items from

⁹⁵ Rome (Italy): News in Italian: 20.00 5 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MST D12; Digest, 5/6 Sep. 1939 (16.00 – 08.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1.

Germany on the same subject and was delivered in a more confident tone.⁹⁶ Another editor commented at the end of a broadcast from Zeesen: ‘It is not easy to understand why this talk attacking England and apparently designed for French listeners should be given in the English language.’⁹⁷ These notes were also used to reveal discrepancies in enemy broadcasting that could have made useful propaganda points, as in the following report of a broadcast from Zeesen in Portuguese:

The Reichstag has taken measures to protect German currency and overseas trade (Note: In English news from Hamburg 20.30 BST 2nd September the following statement appears ‘No special financial measures necessary in Germany contrasting with the Emergency measures in France, England and Poland.’⁹⁸

A number of monitors, who thought it important not to ignore the style and context within which the spoken broadcast was given, also used notes to convey such information. The note, ‘Propaganda slogans in English at intervals between music’, was included for a report of a broadcast from Zeesen on 8 September.⁹⁹ For a report of a German news bulletin in German from Cologne, a different monitor also noted that: ‘The German mid-day news bulletins have recently terminated with “The March of the Germans in Poland.”’¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

During these initial few weeks of the Monitoring Service’s history, the primary role of the organisation was still to be decided and the struggle to develop entirely new professional standards was just beginning. The lack of uniformity that characterised the Digests was caused by both a lack of official guidelines and a lack of knowledge as to how consumers would use the material provided.

⁹⁶ Cologne and Hamburg (Germany): In English: 02.00 2 Sep. 1939, IWM: BBC MST A1. In Digest, broadcast mistakenly reported as broadcast at 2.00 1 Sep. 1939, Digest, 1/2 Sep. 1939 (16.00 - 08.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1.

⁹⁷ Zeesen (Germany): In English for English listeners: 15.40 17 Sep. 1939, Digest, 17/18 Sep. 1939 (15.00 - 08.00), IWM: BBC MSD 2.

⁹⁸ Zeesen (Germany): News in Portuguese: 00.01 3 Sep. 1939, Digest, 3 Sep. 1939 (08.00 – 16.00), IWM: BBC MSD 1.

⁹⁹ Zeesen (Germany): in English: 13.35 8 Sep. 1939, IWM BBC MST A1.

¹⁰⁰ Cologne (Germany): News in German: 13.00 & 14.00 29 Aug. 1939, Digest, 29/30 Aug. 1939, BBC: IWM MSD 1.

It also illustrated an uncertainty as to how far to carry the process of assessment and analysis.

In an attempt to develop the document to best meet the needs of consumers, both the arrangement and content of the Digest underwent rapid alterations during this 20-day period. The subdivision of broadcast categories into their broadcast language or destination, and the addition of a table of contents, enabled readers to more easily locate the transmissions they were most interested in. The innovation of a Daily Notes section, which sought to provide a daily overview of broadcast trends, was aimed at fulfilling the needs of readers who did not have time to study the whole Digest. The additional inclusion of a technical supplement, represented the discovery that such information could provide both military intelligence and directional data, crucial for understanding the political significance of transmissions and thus for conducting the information war. The divergent style, evident in both the Digests and on monitors' transcripts, represented a lack of official guidelines for monitors and editors. However, a trend was already emerging by which the indirect style of reporting was used with greater frequency for summarising material. No formal system for listing repeated items existed, which encouraged the use of summarisation and the adoption of an indirect, descriptive style. There were also indications of a debate about whether monitors should attempt to convey the tone of a broadcast, as well as its contents, and notes were occasionally added to the Digest to accommodate such information.

After the initial few days of the Monitoring Service's history, when the primary focus of the Digest appeared to be on reporting bulletins from, or items about, the United States, the collection priorities of the Service became increasingly focused on Germany. A lack of knowledge as to how the material they produced would be used by consumers, however, presented a difficulty for BBC Monitoring in determining what broadcast information to include in their reports. There is slight evidence in the transcript collection that Department EH, which was directly connected by teleprinter to Wood Norton, made some specific requests of the Service. The number of items of military significance included in monitors' transcripts further indicates that the Monitoring Service may have

already been in contact with the Service departments during this time. Other than this, there were large divergences between those monitors and editors who thought the news content of a broadcast had significance in itself, and those who believed the Monitoring Service should only be concerned with items that were indicative of a nation's attitudes or future actions. A slight majority, but by no means all Monitoring Service employees, reported bulletins with regard to whether they indicated the attitude or intention of the broadcaster. In accordance with this, the Monitoring Service rarely reported domestic news in full. There was a noticeable focus on looking out for new items of news, or items indicative of new political or military developments, and repetitious material was often summarised or omitted from the Digest. In accordance with the initial reason for the establishment of the Service, monitors also reported a number of statements, broadcast on German radio, so that Britain might issue counterstatements.

The next chapter will firstly consider the extent to which the Monitoring Service had managed to standardise the layout and reporting style used in the Digest by June 1940 - ten months after it was first established. It will also consider the procedures by which this had been achieved. Any remaining differences in reporting style, or divergences in what monitors and editors thought important to report will also be considered, with a view to assessing whether these differences were an inherent result of the Monitoring Service's wartime task. The next chapter will secondly examine whether the increased size of the organisation, or the different strategic circumstances of Britain, had an affect on the range and quantity of the information it collected in June 1940.

Chapter 6

Case Study Two Dunkirk, 4 – 14 June 1940

The fall of Paris would mark the end of an important chapter in European history. From the banks of the Seine, and the Marne, stretching eastward, a new Europe would unfold itself, a Europe in which the revolutionary philosophy of Fascism, National Socialism or Chauvinistic and Imperialistic Proletarianism grip the overwhelming majority of the people.¹

Surveying international broadcast reaction to French Prime Minister Paul Reynaud's appeal to America on 13 June 1940, report writers at the BBC Monitoring Service drew their consumers' attention to the above reaction of a correspondent for American broadcasting station NBC. Following the final evacuation of Allied troops from Dunkirk, on the night of third to fourth June, the Monitoring Service recorded not only the deteriorating military situation in northern France but also the psychological effects of this event on other nations, particularly neutral states. The final evacuation of Allied troops from Norway on 8 June and the entry of Italy into the war on 10 June only strengthened the impression of Allied weakness. International impressions of the military situation in Europe, and of British strength and resolve in particular, became of paramount military importance.

This period, perhaps more than any other during the war, illustrates the main challenges faced by BBC Monitoring and their customers, in ordering, assessing and prioritising a continuous stream of international news, rumour, opinion and propaganda. The rapid German military advance across Europe during the spring of 1940 had already complicated the map of international broadcasting, as previously 'free' national stations were taken over by German broadcasters. The coverage of the Monitoring Service itself had also expanded, as the number of consumers making use of monitored material had grown, partly in response to diminishing alternative news sources from occupied Europe. This chapter will

¹ Commentator: Bill Hillman, NBC (USA): in English for North America: 00.50 13 June 1940, Monitoring Report, 14 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 33. (All times given in British Summer Time)

investigate how the working practices and procedures of the Monitoring Service had altered since the start of the war, in order to cope with this complicated picture and increased demand. It will take account of new innovations, such as the introduction of an instant Flash service, and of a Monitoring and War Cabinet Report, and will further examine how the Digest itself was altered to best reflect the changing international situation and best meet consumer needs.

Historical Context

The public perception of Dunkirk in Britain remains closely aligned to that sense of ‘victory in defeat’, which was created during the events themselves. Siân Nicholas has thus asserted how J.B. Priestley’s broadcast, on the evening of 5 June 1940, successfully captured the spirit of those days: ‘What began as a miserable blunder, a catalogue of misfortunes and miscalculations, ended as an epic of gallantry’.² Many aspects of the events and significance of Dunkirk, however, have a long and contested historiography.

Firstly, the imagery of the evacuation of troops from Dunkirk by ‘little boats’, heroically manned by civilian volunteers, has attracted criticism. Without denying that the crews of a number of civilian-manned boats played a heroic part at Dunkirk, the much more numerically significant role of the Royal Navy and Air Force in allowing the evacuation to proceed, has been emphasised by both historians and the Services themselves in recent years.³ Secondly, the initial orthodoxy that Britain never seriously contemplated reaching a compromise peace with Hitler in the spring of 1940 has been challenged. This has particularly been the case since the release of official documents from the 1970s, which has allowed for closer study of the events of the Cabinet meetings held

² J.B. Priestley, *Postscripts* (London, 1940), pp.2-4, in Siân Nicholas, ‘‘Sly Demagogues’ and Wartime Radio: J. B. Priestley and the BBC’, *Twentieth Century British History* 6:3 (1995), pp.254-5.

³ Nicholas Harman, *Dunkirk: The Necessary Myth* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1986); Clive Ponting, *1940: Myth and Reality* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1990); John Ezard, ‘Navy rocks the boat with effort to debunk Dunkirk ‘myth’ of little ships’, *The Guardian* 31 May 2000; W.J.R. Gardner, *The Evacuation from Dunkirk: ‘Operation Dynamo’, 26 May-June 1940*, Naval Staff Histories (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

between 24 and 28 May 1940.⁴ Finally, the story of Dunkirk has been part of a larger debate about the fall of France, Allied military defeat and the so-called German Blitzkrieg.

By the end of May 1940, Denmark, Luxemburg, Holland, Belgium and most of Norway were all occupied and deep incursions had been made into northern France towards the Channel. Following the Dunkirk evacuation, the German military drive south from the Somme-Aisne line was launched on 5 June, reaching Paris by the 12 June. Elsewhere British and French forces, which had remained fighting between Abbeville and the sea, were pushed back to the coast, and those men not evacuated from the cut off area around St Valery-en-Caux were forced to surrender on 13 June. Finally, in a sweeping move, the German Army succeeded in isolating the French forces defending the Maginot line of fortifications. On 22 June, France signed the armistice agreement at Compiègne, and the French army was forced to lay down arms.⁵

The explanation for such rapid military defeat, and for the speed of the German advance across Europe, was initially assigned to the German military tactic of Blitzkrieg. Since the 1970s, however, the Blitzkrieg theory has been convincingly challenged, on the grounds that there is simply no evidence for either a long or short-term German strategy based on rapid military victory in the west. Moreover, it has been claimed that German armaments were both inferior to the Allies and primarily composed of undertrained infantry divisions, not the quick mechanised forces assumed by a Blitzkrieg strategy.⁶ Accompanying this

⁴ Churchill created the impression of British single-minded determination to keep fighting in his 4 June, 'We shall fight on the beaches' speech, and in his multi-volume history of the war: Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War, II, Their Finest Hour* (London: Cassell, 1949). For examination of May Cabinet meetings: John Lukas, *Five Days in London: May 1940* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999); David Reynolds 'Churchill and the British "Decision" to Fight on in 1940: right policy, wrong reasons', in R. Langhorne (ed.) *Diplomacy and Intelligence during the Second World War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

⁵ For post-Dunkirk defence of France: Martin S. Alexander, 'After Dunkirk: The French Army's Performance against 'Case Red', 25 May to 25 June 1940', *War in History* 14:2 (2005), pp.219-264; For account of British involvement in the campaign: Hugh Sebag-Montefiore, *Dunkirk: Fight to the Last Man* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), pp.458-480.

⁶ British military theorists Major-General J.F.C. Fuller and B. H. Liddell-Hart initially promoted the idea of a German Blitzkrieg. For an analytical critique of Blitzkrieg: Matthew Cooper, *The German Army 1933-39: Its Political and Military Failure* (London: Macdonald & Jane's, 1978); R. H. S. Stolfi, *Hitler's Panzers East: World War II Reinterpreted* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991); J.P. Harris, 'Debate The Myth of Blitzkrieg', *War in History* 2:3 (1995),

shift has been an increased explanatory focus on the unpreparedness and military failure of the Allies, which permitted the successes of the improvised German military campaign. The attendant propensity of traditional British accounts to blame France, and the timing of the Belgian surrender, for Allied failure has also been challenged.⁷

German military success in the west contributed to two other major developments that occurred during this period. On 28 May, Allied and Norwegian forces fighting in northern Norway had succeeded in recapturing the port of Narvik, and were furthermore still proceeding eastwards towards the Swedish border. Four days earlier, however, Reynaud and Churchill had agreed, in the light of the desperate military situation in the west, that all Allied troops should be withdrawn from Norway no later than 8 June. Norway could not hope to fight on without Allied support and on 7 June the Norwegian Government and King departed for exile in Britain. On 8 June, the British evacuation of Narvik reached its completion.⁸ Elsewhere, Germany's military success in the west encouraged Mussolini to declare war, at 6pm on 10 June, threatening British control of the Mediterranean, the defence of Egypt and the Suez Canal. On 11 June Italy bombed Malta, Port Sudan and Aden, and Britain, warned of Italy's impending entry into the war, conducted planned bombing raids on Genoa and Turin and on Italian military installations in Eritrea.⁹

Italy was not the only neutral state that was a source of concern or hope for the Allies in June 1940. The USA was a source of hope, for on 31 May the British had succeeded in getting America to bend their neutrality legislation, which had allowed them to purchase substantial quantities of US munitions, designated

pp.335-352; Geoffrey P. Megargee, *Inside Hitler's High Command* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000).

⁷ Douglas Porch, 'Military "Culture" and the Fall of France in 1940: A Review Essay', *International Security* 24:4 (2000), pp.157-180.

⁸ Olav Riste, 'Intelligence and the "Mindset": The German invasion of Norway in 1940', *Intelligence and National Security* 22:4 (2007), pp.521-36; Johs Andenaes, Olav Riste, Magne Skodvin, *Norway and the Second World War* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1996).

⁹ MacGregor Knox, *Mussolini Unleashed, 1939-1941: Politics and Strategy in Fascist Italy's Last War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); John Gooch, *Mussolini and his Generals: The Armed Forces and Fascist Foreign Policy, 1922-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Mussolini had decided on war in late May 1940 but delayed several days at Hitler's request. (Knox, p.116.)

surplus.¹⁰ Spain and those Balkans states, which would feel most immediately in danger once Italy entered the war (Greece, Yugoslavia and Rumania) were also a source of speculation in Britain, for as David Alvarez has stated: ‘the neutrals were, each for its own reason, significant factors in the diplomatic, economic and military calculations of the warring states.’¹¹

Procedure

There were both continuities and changes in monitoring procedure since the first weeks of the war. From April 1940, monitors conducted their work at Wood Norton from three specially constructed wooden huts.¹² The editorial section was still located in London. Most monitored material was still teleprinted each day to London, and as in 1939, items were still corrected and pre-edited by monitoring supervisors prior to this.

A new section, the Information Bureau, was created at the end of 1939. Originally based solely in London, its task was to answer consumer enquiries and transmit urgent monitored items to important consumers. Anecdotal support for the effectiveness of the Bureau, in meeting consumer demands, is quoted in Renier and Rubinstein’s book on the early years of the Service:

Neville Chamberlain made a speech during the House of Commons debate following the withdrawal of forces from Norway; material for use in this speech was sent by special despatch rider (from the London Information Bureau) up to about 10 minutes before it was made.¹³

Originally conducting most of their communication with consumers by telephone, the installation of teleprinter connections by mid-May 1940 changed this procedure. Teleprinter connections were installed between the London Bureau and the War Office, Air Ministry, Admiralty, Foreign Office, Home

¹⁰ Martin Gilbert, *The Second World War* (London: Phoenix, 2009), p.81.

¹¹ David Alvarez, ‘No immunity: Signals Intelligence and the European neutrals, 1939-45’, *Intelligence and National Security* 12:2 (1997), p.22.

¹² Olive Renier & Vladimir Rubinstein, *Assigned to Listen: the Evesham experience, 1939-43* (London: BBC External Services, 1986), p.45.

¹³ E. A. Davies, ‘The Monitoring Service’, in Renier & Rubinstein, p.42.

Office, Press and Censorship Bureau, Ministry of Information, Electra House, and also the Home and Overseas news sections of the BBC.¹⁴

The so-named ‘confessional’ system, by which monitors reported the content of all items in their assigned broadcasts to a Bureau supervisor, prior to writing their reports, was not formally implemented at Wood Norton until 5 July 1940. By June however, several Information Bureau employees had already been dispatched to Wood Norton to provide a more direct link between consumer demands and the daily operation of the listening section.¹⁵ So this was an important period of transition for the working processes of the Monitoring Service.

Along with the listening, Information Bureau and editorial section, a separate report writing section was also in operation by June 1940. This section was responsible for producing a four to six page daily document, the Monitoring Report, and a short daily document for the War Cabinet, which covered much the same material.¹⁶

Collection Priorities

An analysis of the items selected for urgent Flash transmission, and for inclusion in the daily Monitoring Reports, reveals the information that Monitoring employees considered most urgent or important to convey to their consumers. Study of the Daily Digests further reveal the importance that BBC Monitoring assigned to a wider range of different items in June 1940.

Flash

As the ‘confessional’ system had not yet been established in early June 1940, it is generally not possible to detect which items were selected for immediate transmission to Monitoring consumers, as most items were teleprinted. Official

¹⁴ Memo on Monitoring Service, n.d. (c. Feb. 1940), BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

¹⁵ Renier & Rubinstein, p.42.

¹⁶ IWM BBC MSD 32 & 33; War Cabinet Reports, BBC:WAC E2 415/1 – E2 415/6.

instructions dictated that the teleprinting of bulletin reports from Wood Norton should be roughly chronological. An exception to this rule, however, was deemed appropriate where: 'common sense or ad hoc instructions from London recommends.' During this period, reports from Deutschlandsender (the German home service), reports from Hamburg in English and all weather reports were given explicit priority on the teleprinter service.¹⁷ In addition to this, the BBC Monitoring transcript collection reveals when individuals at Wood Norton used their 'common sense' to teleprint items urgently to the London Information Bureau, out of the time sequence dictated by official instructions.

Items of military intelligence were frequently given priority for teleprint transmission. These items could be selected from broadcasts originating from any origin. Two items from an Italian broadcast on 8 June, concerning air attacks, were labelled: 'Urgent flash for I.B. and Editorial'. One of the items reported an attack on Cherbourg by German bombers, supposedly escorted by a new type of fighter plane, said to be faster than the Messerschmitt.¹⁸ It is possible that this was a false identification of a Heinkel 113. Only 12 production aircraft of the type were created in 1938, actually named the HE 110, and the Luftwaffe never accepted them for operational use. In 1940, however, German Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels claimed a new fighter had entered service and transported the few existing HE 110s to different airfields, each time photographing them with a different paint job, to signify imagined HE 113 fighter groups. The deception led to numerous false identifications of the aircraft during the Battle of Britain.¹⁹ The other flashed item was a report of an attack on troops and petrol depots by the German Air Force in Norway, broadcast on the day of the final withdrawal of British troops from the country.²⁰

Items concerning the movement of shipping were also selected for urgent transmission during this time. A monitor's report for an item broadcast on 7 June included the statement: 'Urgent Message to Information Bureau, London'. The item in question stated that the Italian liner *Biancamano* had been ordered to

¹⁷ Memo on Editing, 28 May 1940, BBC: WAC E8/209/1.

¹⁸ Rome (Italy): In English for Near & Middle East: 19.28 8 June 1940, IWM: BBC MST D3.

¹⁹ Neal Ascherson, 'How phantom German fighter tricked Britain', *The Observer*, 22 Oct. 2000.

²⁰ Rome (Italy): In English for Near & Middle East: 19.28 8 June 1940, IWM: BBC MST D3.

remain in Balboa.²¹ This issue was of interest, due to fears that the Conte Biancamano, which was preparing to enter the Panama Canal from the Pacific side, may be deliberately sunk in the channel once Italy announced her entry into the war. This would have prevented other shipping from passing through the canal. Once Italy entered the war on 10 June, the US neutrality patrol impounded the ship and confined the crew on board.²²

Reports on the movement of the British Fleet were also deemed of importance to convey quickly to the authorities. The day after Italy entered the war, an extract from a report of a German broadcast was flashed:

In political circles of New York, rumour is current that part of the units of the British Fleet stationed in Mediterranean is said to have got under way for the Atlantic in the night of 10th to 11th June. These rumours are confirmed by a telegram from correspondent of Agence Radio at Tangier.²³

The importance attached to this report on the movement of British shipping was most likely due to the perceived need to keep track of what was known, and what was being said, about British actions by, and to, an international audience. Any implication that Britain was abandoning the Mediterranean or failing to engage Italian shipping in the region would have implied weakness.

The German news agency DNB was often a source of Flash material, because due to the nature of a press service, news items were frequently reported on this before they were first broadcast. The fact that news items had been reported on this service first, before being publicly broadcast, was not always made clear in the Digest, where such Flashes were frequently omitted. The following three items, all transmitted on DNB, and all illustrating items of military intelligence, were labelled: 'Urgent Message to Information Bureau'. None were included in the corresponding Daily Digest. The time of broadcast and the time each item

²¹ Rome (Italy): English for Far East: 12.15 7 June 1940, IWM: BBC MST D3.

²² 'Fear Panama Canal May be Blocked Out' (by United Press), *The Oelwein Daily Register* (Wire Report), 8 June 1940: <http://www.newspaperarchive.com/SiteMap/FreePdfPreview.aspx?img=104607436>, 13 Sep. 2011.

²³ Frankfurt (Germany): In French for France: 21.15 11 June 1940, BBC MST E7.

was teleprinted is included, to give a sense of the time-scale with which Flashes were identified and transmitted.

Broadcast 12.26; teleprinted 12.45: German Communiqué as broadcast by DNB claims that German forces have entered Dunkirk and that three to four hundred Allied planes have been destroyed.²⁴

Broadcast 10.07, teleprinted 12.45: French soldiers used Dutch soldiers as human shields against German bullets. – Reported by a City Councillor of Berlin.²⁵

Broadcast 12.15; teleprinted 12.45: Helmuth Ringler, Lieutenant in a parachute unit, is the first student of greater Germany to be decorated with the Knight Insignia of the Iron Cross. He captured fort of Eben Emael and bridges over Albert Canal. Was promoted Chief Lieutenant (Oberleutnant).²⁶

The first item had a clear military dimension, but the German claims as to the number of Allied planes destroyed was also valuable in the information war, for the story could be countered if the total number was found to be less. The second item had more of a propaganda angle, for it was a story damaging to the international reputation of the Allies. The third item could not have had any military value by 4 June, as the front line had reached far beyond the Albert Canal by early June. The knowledge that the Iron Cross had been awarded and the story behind it, was perhaps considered important for understanding future German broadcasting, for instance if Helmuth Ringler was referred to again. Items relating to the fate of known individuals were selected for urgent transmission on other occasions, such as one on 4 June relating to the fate of two French Generals:

It will be remembered that Prioux is still prisoner in Germany. Prioux can regard himself as being fortunate, as he has escaped fate of General Corap who has been shot by the French.²⁷

²⁴ DNB (Germany): In German for German Press: 12.26 4 June 1940, IWM BBC MST A189.

²⁵ DNB (Germany): In German for German Press: 10.07 4 June 1940, IWM BBC MST A189.

²⁶ DNB (Germany): In German for German Press: 12.15 4 June 1940, IWM BBC MST A189.

²⁷ Bremen (Germany): In English for England: 10.15 4 June 1940, IWM BBC MST A19.

Interestingly, General Corap was not shot by the French, although, according to historian Ian Ousby, there were rumours within France that he had shot himself.²⁸

Another type of item selected for urgent transmission to London, were reports of British POWs. One list of POW names was included in the Digest as the final item broadcast in a bulletin on 6 June. The item was actually handed in and transmitted first, however, at 23.50 and 23.55 respectively, whereas the monitor did not hand in the other items until 00.35 and they were not teleprinted until 01.38.²⁹ POW names were again transcribed first the following day and again teleprinted separately, before the other items in the broadcast.³⁰

Monitoring Report

A small team of dedicated report writers was well established by June 1940. They prepared a short daily document, The Monitoring Report. Issued at 11.30, prior to both parts of the Digest, this four to six page document sought to distil the most important news stories and broadcasting trends from the previous 24 hours broadcasting, and also act as an introduction and guide to the larger Digests. It was written in an indirect tone, apart from direct quotations from the Digest, which were included either to illustrate points made by the report writer, or if the specific wording of the item was deemed crucial. Both direct quotations, and allusions to certain broadcasts, were followed by a reference to the station, language and time of broadcast, as well as to the section of the Digest within which the item could be found:

Oslo reports that French and British subjects living in Rome have been requested to go back to their countries. (Norwegian for Norway 12.50, Cat. 1G)³¹

²⁸ Ian Ousby, *Occupation: the ordeal of France, 1940-1944* (Pimlico, London: 1999), p.49.

²⁹ Bremen (Germany): In English for England: 23.15 6 June 1940, IWM: BBC MST A19; Digest, I, 7 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

³⁰ Hamburg (Germany): In English for England: 23.15 7 June 1940, IWM: BBC MST A19.

³¹ Monitoring Report, 5 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

The report writing section was also responsible for preparing a three to four page daily report on international broadcasting for the War Cabinet. The War Cabinet Report was published three hours after the Monitoring Report and its content was essentially identical, except for the omission of references to the provenance, and Digest location, of mentioned broadcasts. This was to make the Cabinet Report shorter, neater and easier to read.³²

The main body of the Monitoring and Cabinet Reports were arranged into several sub-headed sections. Within these sub-headed sections, evidence from that day's broadcasting was collected together, so that what different countries were saying, or not saying, about a particular story or issue was quoted or referred to. The content of these sections was partly driven by the material reported in the Digest, and therefore to an extent reflected the most discussed broadcast items during the 24-hour period. However, it was not only the quantity of broadcast time devoted to an item that determined its selection. Items were also selected if they represented a new political or military development or a new propaganda line of potential interest to readers of the report.

This period was dominated by the military disaster in northern France and the aftermath of the evacuation of British and French troops from Dunkirk, however this was rarely a main topic of discussion of itself in the Monitoring Reports. Following the 5 June issue, when the reactions of the world's media to the fall of Dunkirk had occupied first place, the main focus of the Report switched to the impending entry of Italy into the war and its potential international repercussions. It seems to have been seen as unnecessary to continue repeating the same reports of Britain's defeat, and international reactions to their attempts to present it as otherwise, for they contained little of strategic or new propaganda significance.

Although Italy's entry into the war was expected, the specific date was still uncertain and report writers sought to draw together the conflicting, and occasionally misleading, indications given over the airwaves. The 5 June Report repeated monitored items relating to Italy's territorial demands, along with

³² War Cabinet Reports, BBC:WAC 415/1-6.

German, Italian and Spanish reports that suggested Italy's entry into the war was close. 'But', the report stated, 'it would seem th[at] Italy's moment has not yet arrived in spite of the heralding by Germany and Italy in the last few days. The Cabinet meeting yesterday approved a number of measures of a wartime character but no more.'³³ The following day a section entitled 'Italy Hangs Fire' was included first in the Report. It surveyed the general tone of Italian broadcasting throughout the day, which had been: 'strong in identifying the interests and aims of Mussolini and Hitler, Italy and Germany.' The report writer then added their own judgement of an item broadcast from the German-controlled station Kalundborg, which had claimed there were no new reports regarding Italy's attitude:

This innocent statement has an air of the atmosphere created by Germany immediately before the German troops marched into Holland at Whitsuntide. On that occasion it was deliberately given out from Berlin that Germany was preparing for a Whitsuntide holiday and that nothing need be expected before Thursday. (See Monitoring Report No. 296 10th/11th May)³⁴

This attempt by the report writer to anticipate the timing of political and military events by analysing broadcast behaviour is reminiscent of the wartime experiments conducted by both the BBC Monitoring Service Research Section and Department EH. Speculation on the matter of Italy's entry into the war continued to be reported over the following four days.

The future neutrality of other nations was also considered in some depth within the Reports. Spain was frequently mentioned alongside speculations concerning Italy, as on 4 June:

Still playing the triangle game around Gibraltar the Italian Press is quoted on Spain's demand for its return, and quotes with apparent approval the statement that the Spain of Franco is prepared for war.³⁵

³³ Monitoring Report, 5 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

³⁴ Monitoring Report, 6 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

³⁵ Monitoring Report, 5 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

Several days later the report returned to the position of Spain, and the attempt of Axis broadcasting to use Gibraltar to illustrate Spain's real interest in joining the war.

Spain naturally interests the trouble-makers. A broadcast from Zeesen in Spanish at 21.00 (Cat 1B) declares that Germany will attack Britain when Mussolini enters the war, "and England will have to recall some of her naval units (from the Mediterranean) to protect her own shores." Moscow reports Berlin rumours that mobilisation has been proclaimed in Spain. (Moscow in Russian 16.00, Cat.4A)³⁶

Following Italy's entry into the war, Spain was not mentioned in the Report again for the remainder of this period. A few Reports considered whether Germany would respect Swiss neutrality, and included reports of bombs being dropped on Swiss territory.³⁷ Slightly more space was devoted to considering the position of the Balkans, both prior to and following Italy's declaration of war, for as the 6 June Monitoring Report stated: 'The whole of the Balkans is standing by somewhat anxiously'.³⁸ Prior to Italy's declaration, the Allies were accused of attempting to draw Greece into the war, and German talks directed to the region, which sought to discredit Britain, were included in the Monitoring Report. The Report also repeated Italian broadcasting, which claimed the countries of Southeast Europe had shown an increased understanding of the needs and aspirations of Italy.³⁹ A claim that the Allies were seeking to create conflict between Turkey and Greece, by encouraging the former to occupy Greek islands, was further included in the Report.⁴⁰

The 11 June Report was largely devoted to reporting Italy's entry into the war. It considered speculations regarding Italy's immediate plan of action, particularly Mussolini's promise to respect the neutrality of neighbouring states, named as Switzerland, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Greece and Egypt.⁴¹ Attention also turned to international reaction to Italy's declaration:

³⁶ Monitoring Report, 7 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

³⁷ Monitoring Report, 5 June 1940; Monitoring Report, 6 June 1940, both IWM: BBC MSD 32.

³⁸ Monitoring Report, 6 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

³⁹ Monitoring Report, 5 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

⁴⁰ Monitoring Report, 6 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

⁴¹ Monitoring Report, 13 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 33.

Already the interests of the U.S.A., Soviet Russia and Japan are being considered in relation to Italy's entry into the war... Kalundborg 18.00 (Cat. 1M) broadcast various items of news indicating the growing demand in the U.S. for immediate intervention in the war. Moscow is particularly interested in the activity of the U.S.⁴²

German success in Europe had encouraged Japan to look towards European colonies in Southeast Asia, but before taking advantage of the situation, Japan had to first adjust their relations with the Soviet Union. Throughout spring 1940, the prospect of a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union began to gain favour in Japanese military circles, as did support for a military alliance with Germany.⁴³

One main value of the Monitoring Report was in bringing out stories, news items or propaganda reports that might have gone unnoticed by readers of the larger Digests. The Allied withdrawal from Narvik is a case in point, as the 11 June Report illustrates:

It is evident that but for the news from Italy the German wireless would have treated the Allies' withdrawal from Narvik as the main feature of the day. Germany insists that the meaning of the withdrawal is the inability of the British navy to secure communications.⁴⁴

It was not until 13 June, once the military and international repercussions of Italy's entry to the war had been absorbed, that attention again returned to the situation in France. The first section of the Report stated that a broadcast from Bremen, which described the defensive preparations of Paris, had 'embodied a more sinister and definite threat'. German broadcasts that made historical comparisons between the fortification of Paris and the recent fate of Warsaw and Rotterdam, were also referenced: 'There is not much time left, said Bremen, and should the city become a heap of ruins, the responsibility will lie with the French Government and their British masters.'⁴⁵ The second section of the Report, entitled 'Panic in France', surveyed German attempts to present France as

⁴² Monitoring Report, 11 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 33.

⁴³ Ian Kershaw, *Fateful Choices: Ten Decisions That Changed the World, 1940-1941* (London: Allen Lane, 2007), pp.110-111.

⁴⁴ Monitoring Report, 11 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 33.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

standing alone.⁴⁶ The following issue of the Report was dominated by speculation on future French strategy, the question of a separate French peace, and German warnings regarding the fortification of Paris.⁴⁷ The first one and a half pages of the Report, however, considered international reaction to Reynaud's appeal to Roosevelt for assistance. Sympathetic broadcasts from America were quoted, including the one cited at the beginning of this chapter. Report writers also gave their own impression as to the tone of Axis reactions to the appeal:

Both Germany and Italy seem to be somewhat worried by these appeals to the U.S.A. and anxious to belittle the possible results. Commenting on M. Reynaud's appeal to Roosevelt, Bremen says he asks for an expeditionary force from America before it is too late. It is already too late, says Bremen. (In Dutch for Holland 18.30, Cat. 1D.)⁴⁸

The Report writers further sought to highlight contradictions in nation's broadcasting, in order to provide potentially useful propaganda material and to examine the relationship between different nations:

Italy at 18.15 stated that Dunkirk has fallen and is now in German hands (Bari for Near and Middle East 18.15, Cat. 3B), yet in Italian for Italy at 23.00 the fall of Dunkirk is said to be imminent (Cat. 3A). This suggests a curious and rare inefficiency in backing up the German claim, for Deutschlandsender at 17.15 has made a special announcement that the fortress of Dunkirk has fallen and the whole of the Channel coast to the Somme Estuary was occupied by German troops.⁴⁹

As shown in this example, Report writers went beyond marshalling material contained within the Daily Digest under appropriate sub-headings. They also used their own knowledge of previous broadcasting patterns to provide context and added value to broadcast reports.

⁴⁶ Monitoring Report, 13 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 33.

⁴⁷ Monitoring Report, 14 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 33.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Monitoring Report, 5 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

Daily Digest

The Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts included a larger selection of material than the Monitoring Reports. Despite this, the documents from this period still reflect the shifting military front line in Europe and the attendant political adjustments and realignments this produced.

i. Arrangement of Items

Throughout this period, the Digest was issued daily in two parts, each covering the 24-hour period from 03.00 the previous day to 03.00 on the morning of issue. Part one covered all transmissions from German and German-occupied territory and part two covered transmissions from all other destinations. In recognition of the greater importance with which German controlled broadcasting was regarded, part I of the Digest was issued first every day at 12.30, whereas part II was not issued until 15.00.⁵⁰

Items within the first part of the Digest were arranged by country of origin and sometimes within this by broadcast destination. These categories altered twice during the ten-day period, following the retreat at Dunkirk, reflecting the turmoil caused by the German military advance through Europe. On 5 June, German home transmissions were listed first in part one of the Digest, followed by items broadcast from Germany for Europe, North America, South America, Africa, the Middle East and India, and the Far East. Indicating their recent conquest, broadcasts from German-controlled Norway, Holland and Belgium were all included within their own sections, as were those from occupied Denmark and aligned Slovakia. The German news agencies were included in their own section, as were 'free' German stations. All broadcasts emanating from France were still reported in the second part of the Digest on this day.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Part I of Digest comprised 72-83 pages of content. Digest, I, 6 June 1940; Digest, I, 9 June 1940; Digest, I, 13 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32&33. See appendix 4 for a list of categories for part one of the Digest, for 5, 8 and 9 June, and appendix 5 for a list of categories for part two of the Digest, for 5 and 8 June.

⁵¹ Digest, I, 5 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

The arrangement of items was first reorganised on 8 June and then slightly again the following day. German home transmissions were still listed first in their own category on 8 and 9 June. The previous category 1B: 'Germany for Europe', was replaced on 8 June by the more specific category 'German for occupied territory', comprising Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Norway, Poland, the Protectorate and Slovakia. Broadcasts from those occupied territories were listed next, followed by category 1D: 'Germany for England and France' and 1E: 'Germany for Italy'. German broadcasts for neutrals in Europe, listed as Sweden, Spain, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria and Greece, were then listed together under section 1F. The other categories remained unchanged by the reshuffle, apart from two previously separate categories, 'From Germany for North America' and 'From Germany for South America', which were amalgamated on 8 June as category 1K. The following day, 9 June, a much smaller reshuffle took place. This comprised of dividing broadcasts from 'Germany to England and France' into two categories, which were now listed second (1B: England) and third (1C: France), moving the other categories down, in the same order as the previous day.

The main change in the listing over these two days was therefore the breakup of the previously large category Germany for Europe, and the combining together of broadcasts from German-occupied nations. The fact broadcasts directed towards North and South America were combined together and listed much further back in the Digest also seems relevant, given they had previously comprised the third and fourth categories of the report. These changes can be attributed to two separate considerations.

The first was an alteration in the focus of BBC Monitoring's interest, from international political reactions to the British defeat at Dunkirk, to military events within Europe. Italy's entry into the war resulted in a brief surge of interest in American reactions by the authors of the Monitoring Report, but the focus of the Digest clearly shifted to Europe during this period. This was particularly indicated by the decision to assign separate categories for German broadcasts to France, England and Italy.

The rearrangement of categories within the Digest also reflected the amount of material that was being regularly included under the different categories. Throughout this ten-day period, German home broadcasting comprised a considerably large proportion of the Digest, ranging between 30 to 40 percent.⁵² Under the first arrangement of the Digest, category 1B: 'Germany for Europe' occupied a large percentage of the document, ranging between 31% on 7 June (61% for England) and 51% on 6 June (72% for England).⁵³ The separating of 'Germany for France' into a separate category was also an important step at this stage, as France was being invaded, and previously French stations were falling under German control. This caused the proportion of space occupied by German broadcasts to France to increase. From 8 June, German-operated 'French free stations' were transferred from part two of the Digest to Category 1C of part one.

In contrast, all other sections, if a broadcast was included at all, only occupied one to four pages in the Digest prior to 8 June reshuffle. This partly explains the grouping together from 8 June of all broadcasts from German-occupied territory into one category. After the reshuffle, reports of all occupied broadcasting together still only occupied a modest proportion of the Digest, between ten and 13 percent. Similarly, the justification for grouping together broadcasts from Germany to occupied territory can be seen in the proportion of space they took up in the Digest, between four and seven percent.⁵⁴ The grouping together of occupied countries, and neutral countries, in Europe into categories also clarified their status during a period of rapid change.

The second part of the Digest, which will not be considered in depth for this or the following case study, also underwent a major reorganisation on 8 June 1940. This was undertaken to reduce the number of categories included in the report, from 26 to ten. These new categories largely mirrored those devised for part one of the Digest. The first three categories in the report remained the same,

⁵² 22/72 pages on 5 June and 28/70 pages 8 June, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

⁵³ 23/74 on 7 June (14 for England) and 38/75 pages on 6 June (27½ for England), IWM: BBC MSD 32.

⁵⁴ Broadcasts from German-occupied territory: 9/70 pages (8 June); 8/83 (9 June); 8/76 (10 June); 8/81 (11 June); 10/83 (13 June). Broadcasts from Germany to Occupied territory: 3/70 (8 June); 6/83 pages (9 June); 5/76 (10 June); 5/81 (11 June); and only 3/83 pages (13 June), IWM: BBC MSD 32&33.

indicating their continued importance: 2: 'French transmissions', 3: 'Italian transmissions' and 4: 'U.S.S.R'. All other categories were re-arranged and many compiled together. Whereas broadcasts from U.S.A had previously occupied the next category, 5, it was replaced, after 8 June, by a combined category of 'Baltic (Sweden, Finland, Estonia) and Switzerland'. Another two combined categories 6: 'Spain and Portugal' and 7: 'Balkans' were listed next. The remaining categories, all compilations of formerly separately listed items - 8: 'Near and Middle East and India', 9: 'Far East' and 11: 'Dominions and Eire' - had previously occupied some of the last items in the Digest. A notable exception was 'North America', which, previously listed fifth, was now listed tenth, along with broadcasts from South America.⁵⁵

ii. Stop Press

Secondly, there were strict guidelines regarding the date of the Digest to which the report of a bulletin should be included, according to the time of day at which it was broadcast: from 03.00 to 03.00. There were some exceptions to this rule, however, with items broadcast after the 03.00 deadline still being included in that day's Digest. Such items were included in a special section at the front of each Digest entitled 'Stop Press'. The fact editors did not wait until the following day's issue of the Digest to include these reports indicates their assumed importance. They were generally items of news relating to what editors assumed were the most pressing issues of the moment, and they tended to emanate from American stations, due to the time of day of broadcast, usually around 04.00.

Two items relating to Italy's impending entry into the war, and the implication of this for neighbouring states, were included in the Stop Press section on 8 June. One repeated an alleged report of a transfer of Italian forces, from Yugoslavia to the French borders, and German forces, to two towns in Austria. The other concerned Italy's promise to respect Egypt's frontiers and Egypt's apparent doubts as to the fulfillment of this promise.⁵⁶ The 10 June Digest contained a

⁵⁵ IWM: BBC MSD 32.

⁵⁶ WCAB (USA): In English for North America: 04.00 8 June 1940, Digest, I, 8 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

Stop Press item reporting the move of 20 fresh German divisions into the Black Forest, directly opposite the Swiss border, which it was claimed made Italy's entry into the war more certain than ever.⁵⁷ A second stop press item on 10 June announced the news, for the first time in the Digest, that Norway had made a separate peace with Germany, that the few remaining Norwegian defenders had laid down arms, and that King Haakon had left for England.⁵⁸

A Stop Press item on 13 June, repeated a rumour that Rumania might join the Rome-Berlin axis that day, that the press in Bucharest were openly advocating the move, and that several orders effectively stopping all shipping between Rumania and Turkey had been brought into force. A second Stop Press item concerned an uncensored report from Stockholm that over 500,000 Russian troops had been sent to the Baltic countries, mostly Lithuania, to reinforce garrisons on the German frontier.⁵⁹ This report anticipated the following day's actions, of 14 June, when the Soviet Union delivered an ultimatum to the Lithuanian Government and occupied the country under the terms of the secret protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. On 16 June Latvia and Estonia were to suffer a similar fate.⁶⁰

The Stop Press section of the Digest thus acted in a similar way to the developing Flash service, by selecting the most important emerging items in the early hours of each morning.

iii. Content and Omitted Material

The procedure adopted by monitors, supervisors and sub-editors in London had become increasingly formalised since the beginning of the war, and the selection of material included in the Digest had consequently also become more standardised. Supervisors at Wood Norton had a duty to teleprint all items from reports of German broadcasting to London but they could exercise their

⁵⁷ WCAB (USA): In English for North America: 04.00 10 June 1940, Digest, I, 10 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ WCAB (USA): In English for North America: 04.00 13 June 1940, Digest, I, 13 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 33.

⁶⁰ Izidors Vizulis, *The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939: The Baltic Case* (New York: Praeger, 1990).

discretion as to how fully to report an item, as could monitors. All items contained in broadcasts from Germany were generally also included in the Digest, but again editors could use their discretion as to how fully to report the item.⁶¹

There were, however, exceptions to this rule, when items reported by monitors on their transcripts did not appear as either reported items or listed repeats in the Daily Digest.⁶² Such omissions frequently occurred due to the pressure exerted by the occurrence of a major event, which called for a greater than usual proportion of Digest space. Two reported items from a broadcast from Frankfurt were neither reported in the Digest nor listed as repeats on 8 June. The first was an opinion piece on the actions of the Polish General Sikorski, which condemned the military actions of the Polish army in France; and the second was a report of preparations for the defence of Paris.⁶³ Although perhaps not the exact wording, the sense of both items had been conveyed in other reports.

In contrast to broadcasts from Germany, supervisors at Wood Norton and editors were given discretion to select which items to teleprint to London from reports of non-German broadcasts. In the case of non-German broadcasting, the task of selecting which items to report to London, and which items to include in the Digest, was thus a more subjective task than editing broadcasts from Germany. As instructions to supervising editors at Wood Norton declared in late May 1940:

It is our duty to inform London immediately of any change of trend by reporting it fully. By now London knows perfectly well that in Italian reports the German communiqué comes before those of the Allies. London knows that Eire reports are colourless, neutral, and consist mainly of agency messages. If at any time Ankara ceased to be strongly pro-ally, or Italian broadcasts become restful and objective, we would at once send an extensive report without excisions.⁶⁴

⁶¹ A Monitor's four-page report of a talk, summarised from a ten-minute item, was reduced by another three pages by a supervisor, prior to teleprinting: German Overseas Service: In English for S. & E. Asia & Africa: 10.05 1 June 1940, IWM: BBC MST A19.

⁶² Bremen (Germany): In English for England: 00.15 9 June 1940, IWM: BBC MST A19.

⁶³ Frankfurt (Germany): In French for France: 22.15 8 June 1940, IWM: BBC MST E7.

⁶⁴ Memo on Editing, 28 May 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

If a non-German broadcast did not contain any new revelation or indication, then the instruction was to omit, or report it very briefly. Items of home news for certain countries were frequently omitted, as at the start of the war.⁶⁵ Reporting of Italian broadcasting generally formed a larger proportion of the Digest than that of any other neutral during this period, but whole reports of Italian broadcasts were still omitted from the Digest. Most dramatically, all monitors' reports of Italian broadcasts in English, from 3 to 5 June, were omitted. This was probably due to the pressure exerted on Digest space, during this period of heightened activity, but given Italy's expected entry into the war it seems a surprising omission.⁶⁶ A system had just begun to be implemented at this time, by which regularly reported transmissions, not included in a particular issue of the Digest, were listed on the contents page under an appropriate explanatory heading: 'Unintelligible', 'Not Received', 'Not Broadcast', or 'No Material of Interest'.⁶⁷ This was all part of an ongoing process to standardise the Digest by providing consumers with a consistent level of expected broadcast coverage.

Reporting Style

Although it has been demonstrated that BBC Monitoring continually adapted their collection priorities to meet the changing international situation, a desire for consistency in style, and reliability in output, can also be seen in the reports produced during this period, especially in the Digests.

Repeats, Amplifications and Variations

One of the most important developments which had taken place within the Service, since the early days of the war, was the introduction of a system for listing repeated, amplified, and variants of items already reported in the Digest.

⁶⁵ A Slovakian broadcast report stated that three home news items had been broadcast, but no details were given. Bratislava (Slovakia): In Slovak for Slovakia: 22.00 4 June 1940, Digest, I, 5 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

⁶⁶ IWM: BBC MST D3; Digests, II, 4-7 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

⁶⁷ Digest, II, 9 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

The identification of repeats by monitors saved valuable translating and transcribing time and assisted editors in their task of recognising repeats. Monitors were expected to report, in some manner, every item in their assigned bulletins, unless they knew the item had been broadcast from the same country before, and could state the exact bulletin in which it had been broadcast. If they recognised an item as a repeat, monitors indicated this on their report with the abbreviation 'Rep', before providing a short indication of the item's contents and the details of the bulletin in which the item had been reported previously. Every item in a bulletin was numbered and the original numbering was maintained throughout the editing process.⁶⁸

It was the responsibility of editors to list repeats in the Digest and identify any items not spotted as such by monitors. Each broadcast item was assigned a set title or headline, for example, 'Italians attack at Djibuti (sic.)'.⁶⁹ Repeats were then listed in the Digest, by their headline, at the end of each broadcast report. Repeats were listed under two potential headings: 'Old Repeats', for items which had already been reported in a previous issue of the Digest, and 'New Repeats', for items which had first been reported in that issue of the Digest. Thus the very first broadcast reported in any Digest might list an 'Old Repeat' but would never list a 'New Repeat' for this was where the item would be first reported.

This system can be seen working in practice for a broadcast from Bremen on 9 June, for which all items were listed as repeats on the monitor's transcript, along with references to the bulletins in which they had previously been reported. These were then subsequently all listed as repeats in the Digest.⁷⁰ The system did not always run so smoothly, however, and there was considerable duplication of effort, with monitors copying out items in full, which were subsequently not

⁶⁸ 'Monitoring Unit: Rules of Work', n.d. (c. May 1940), BBC: WAC E2/409/1; Memo on Editing, 28 May 1940, BBC: WAC E8/209/1.

⁶⁹ WCAB (USA): In English for North America: 03.30 12 June 1940, Digest, I, 12 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 33. Djibouti was then in French Somaliland.

⁷⁰ Bremen (Germany): In English for England: 20.15 9 June 1940, IWM: BBC MST A19; Digest, I, 10 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

teleprinted to London, or were teleprinted to London only to be listed as repeats in the Digest.⁷¹

For broadcasts from Germany, editors had to account for every item in each broadcast. There was no similar obligation to account for every item in non-German broadcasts but part two of the Digest still used the same system for listing repeats when appropriate.⁷²

This system of repeats also included a method for reporting an item identical to one previously reported, but which also included additional sentences or information. Such items were labelled amplifications and were denoted in the Digest by the abbreviation 'amp'. The abbreviation was included in brackets, after the item headline, and the new material was then reported. This was a way to avoid taking up Digest space by repeating old material.⁷³

Another abbreviation included in Digest reports was the phrase 'var.', to indicate that a variation of the same item had been reported previously. Variations could be used to omit material that was the same as in the previous item, and only include the differently phrased material. Usually, however, the entire item was reported in the Digest, and 'var.' was merely included to indicate the similar nature of the item to consumers.⁷⁴

The deeming of an item as a variant, rather than a new item, was a subjective matter. The fact that variations seem to occur most often for stories of particular importance supports this impression. On 2 June, the first item listed in the entire Digest was entitled 'B.E.F.'s Rearguard Action', and began:

⁷¹ Deutschlandsender (Germany): In English for England: 19.30 8 June 1940, IWM BBC: MST A19; Digest, I, 9 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32; Deutschlandsender (Germany): In English for England: 20.30 9 June 1940, Digest, I, 10 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

⁷² Memo on Editing, 28 May 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

⁷³ Item 10, Bremen (Germany): In English for England: 19.15 8 June 1940; Item 2, Deutschlandsender (Germany): In English for England: 22.45 8 June 1940, Digest, I, 9 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

⁷⁴ Rome (Italy): In English for England: 19.28 6 June 1940, Digest, I, 7 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

“The Western Powers observe with pride the greatest rearguard action in history”, announced the London news service with false pompousness. This pride is based on another report which says that the organisation of the retreat was brilliant. How brilliantly the so-called retreat of the B.E.F. is being carried out is depicted in the same report in words which are not very comforting.⁷⁵

The report of another broadcast, later in the Digest, contained as item 2 a listed variant of the above item. It began:

The ridiculous cackle of foreign propaganda about the so-called brilliant retreat of the English from Flanders becomes even more disgusting and revolting. Now we have stories by alleged eye witnesses and soldiers. The London radio tells of the loveliest retreat in world history.⁷⁶

This demonstrates that items were sometimes identified as variants if they were perceived as making the same major point, even if they contained quite different phrasing and content.

Style and Summarisation

The development of a more uniform style of reporting monitored broadcasts, since the start of the war, is discernable in the transcripts and Digests produced during this period.

News items were now consistently reported in a direct tone. The only exception to this rule was when a précis or summary of an item or bulletin was made. In such cases the report would adopt an indirect, descriptive style.⁷⁷

There were two occasions on which an indirect summary of a news item may be given. One was when reception conditions were so poor that little more than an indication of the broadcast content could be deciphered. An item contained in a

⁷⁵ Deutschlandsender (Germany): In German for Germany: 06.00 1 June 1940, Digest, I, 2 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

⁷⁶ Deutschlandsender (Germany): In German for Germany: 13.00 1 June 1940, Digest, I, 2 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

⁷⁷ See previous case study for a table explaining reporting style, p.188.

broadcast from Frankfurt, described as ‘Reception poor. Jammed’, was thus reported in an indirect style:

Last sentences barely audible, contain an appeal to the French people to make peace and not let themselves be exploited any longer by Jewish and English profiteers.⁷⁸

The other type of exception, which caused the reporting of news items to switch from a direct to indirect style, occurred when an item was shortened because it contained information deemed repetitive or non-essential. For instance, editors replaced a monitor’s report of an item that provided the details of the military career of the new commander of the Southern Army, with the words ‘Details of career’ in the Digest report.⁷⁹

In contrast to news items, long reports, such as talks, were frequently related in an indirect style. The reason for this was not always apparent, for example, a report from Deutschlandsender read:

Some of the camera-men who take pictures included in the news-reels, were the next to come to the microphone. (Recording) One camera-man started out on 20th May, and was instructed to proceed to the siege of Mauberge, and to film the attack of the artillery, dive-bombers and other planes which did their work thoroughly.⁸⁰

There does not seem any reason here for the report to adopt a descriptive style, when the recording could have been translated and reported directly, as the cameraman spoke of his experience. The answer may be that this would have made the report considerably longer. The particular difficulties in reporting a talk in a direct or verbatim style, however, were illustrated by a report of an item entitled ‘Allied Prisoners interviewed’:

A French prisoner is interviewed. Both prisoner and interviewer speak cheerfully. The French prisoner says that the Germans had given them

⁷⁸ Frankfurt (Germany): In French for France: 20.15 4 June 1940, Digest, I, 5 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

⁷⁹ Rome (Italy): In English for England: 19.28 7 June 1940, IWM: BBC MST D3; Digest, I, 8 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

⁸⁰ Deutschlandsender (Germany): In German for Germany: 18.00 4 June 1940, Digest, I, 5 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

soup to eat, that everything had been very hard especially the bombing – and that now they are all very happy. He also adds, “ We are not afraid of you.”

The interviewer then translates this into very colloquial German. He points out that the French soldiers are not afraid of the German and says that they had apparently thought that they would immediately be massacred.⁸¹

If the monitor had adopted a direct tone in this case, and simply copied down a translation of how the German had translated the French POW, it would have taken up considerable space and would merely have demonstrated the monitor’s own translation of both languages into English. If the monitor had attempted to translate the item in the style of the interviewer, then they too would have been faced with a dilemma of whether or not to try and translate his words into colloquial English, to match the colloquial German. The use of an indirect style of reporting, which allowed the item to be reported with greater concision and provided a sense of the tone of the report, appeared most appropriate for this section of the broadcast at least. The choice was then to suddenly switch reporting style for this section, or report the whole talk indirectly. This was true not only where translation occurred within a broadcast but also if monitors wished to convey the tone of any speaker, an aspect often more important in talks than formal news bulletins.

Notes

Another method to convey the tone of a broadcast, or information about the broadcaster, was to add a note to a report. Notes written by monitors and editors to provide additional details about a broadcast, beyond its contents, were not included as often in the Digest during this period as they had been at the beginning of the war. This reflected both the introduction of the formal system for listing repeats, and also the introduction of the Monitoring Report, whose authors took over much of the duty of providing added value to broadcast

⁸¹ Deutschlandsender (Germany): In German for Germany: 18.00 6 June 1940, Digest, I, 7 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

reports: identifying new stories and broadcast trends. Several types of note, however, were still included in the Digest.

Monitor's notes, particularly those included in reports from Germany in English, sought to provide details about the broadcast announcers. A monitor's note on 9 June stated, 'Speaker was advertised as Lord Haw Haw but was actually the man always referred to here as Sinister Sam'.⁸² Monitor's notes regarding broadcast tone were also occasionally included in the Digest, such as the following written for a report from Bremen:

First attempt of this announcer to be sarcastic (see item 4) was extremely unpleasant. Although he has obviously been coached in sneers and meaning laughs by Sinister Sam, his language is not yet up to it.⁸³

Notes providing contextual information were also included, when they provided an indication as to the tone of a report:

At 16.00 the German Communiqué was given in the form of a special announcement preceded by three "Wacht am Rhein" fanfares. After the communiqué, the "March against France", and the "March against England" were played (sic) and sung.⁸⁴

Another Monitor's Note gave an account of the announcer's demeanor, which may have indicated a degree of chaos around the studio: 'Announcer seemed very flustered at beginning of the bulletin, got mixed up with the names of radiating stations, hesitated a good deal with the opening sentence.'⁸⁵

Notes were still used on occasion to provide explicitly technical information about a broadcast, but these were often made by monitors for internal use, and not included in the Digest. An exception to this was a report included for a German broadcast in English from NBBS:

⁸² Zeesen (Germany): In English for Africa: 18.30 9 June 1940, IWM: BBC MST A19.

⁸³ Bremen (Germany): In English for England: 14.15 4 June 1940, Digest, I, 5 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

⁸⁴ Deutschlandsender (Germany): In German for Germany: 18.00 6 June 1940, Digest, I, 7 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

⁸⁵ Frankfurt (Germany): In French for France: 22.15 8 June 1940, Digest, I, 9 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

At 17.30 signature picked up on 25.08 m. but practically inaudible until 17.37 as smothered by Rabat. Later drifted away from Rabat and reception much better. Closed down 17.52 and not found upon any other frequency. At 21.30 not picked up until 21.45 when found transmitting on a frequency of 11,910 kcs. 25.19 m. – reception extremely faint. Some interference from jamming which was not intended for NBBS but for Moscow broadcasting in Italian on an adjacent frequency.⁸⁶

Such a long monitor's note on reception conditions was probably included in the Digest because broadcasts to England from NBBS were frequently reported verbatim. This report actually included the word 'verbatim' in brackets to describe the way in which it had been reported. Therefore, some explanation had to be given for the report, which was full of gaps and question marks and was difficult to read.

Basic monitor's references as to reception conditions, such as 'Reception poor' or 'Jammed', were included much more frequently throughout these Digests than they had been at the beginning of the war, but the number of question marks and gaps included in Digest reports was conversely reduced from the amount found on monitor's transcripts.⁸⁷ This allowed Monitoring to provide their consumers with an indication as to the reliability of the report produced, whilst not compromising the readability or stylistic flow of the passage.

A final form of note that may have been useful for the purposes of formulating British propaganda, or issuing counter-statements to enemy propaganda, can be demonstrated by the following report of a broadcast from Germany:

The number of planes claimed as shot down in aerial combats is stated as 79 and not 104 as from Deutschlandsender.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ NBBS (Germany): In English for England: 17.30 9 June 1940, Digest, I, 10 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

⁸⁷ Frankfurt (Germany): In French for France: 20.15 9 June 1940; Deutschlandsender (Germany): In French for France: 21.15 9 June 1940, both Digest, I, 10 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

⁸⁸ Deutschlandsender (Germany): In German for Germany: 18.00 6 June 1940, Digest, I, 7 June 1940, IWM: BBC MSD 32.

This illustrates how monitor's notes were still used on occasion, as at the beginning of the war, to impart the specialist broadcast knowledge of Monitoring Service employees.

Conclusion

This chapter has firstly identified the changes that had been implemented in monitoring procedure since the beginning of the war. Coverage of both German and non-German broadcasts had increased greatly over the previous nine months, as had the number of Monitoring consumers, with their varied collection requirements. One of the consequences of this was an increased formalisation in monitoring procedure and reporting style.

Working arrangements, agreed with the output side of the work based in London, determined that monitors had to report every item in every broadcast they listened to and that only supervisors at Wood Norton and editors in London had the authority to omit items from their reports of non-German broadcasts. The introduction of a system for listing repeats in the Digest, further allowed for all German broadcasting initially listened to, to be accounted for in the Digest. This process, as well as meeting the requirements of consumers interested in statistical work, placed less reliance on the individual employee to select material, especially the monitor.⁸⁹ This formalisation in procedure was an important step for an organisation that was rapidly increasing in size and workload and yet also striving for professional standards and unified, clear output documents, compiled to meet consumer needs. The Service still, however, had to rely on monitor's translations of the non-English transmissions to which they listened. Moreover, monitors and editors were permitted to use their discretion in how fully they decided to report each item. Given there was neither time nor space in the Digest for all items to be reported in full, the Service's reliance on the individual expertise and selection decisions of their employees was inevitable.

⁸⁹ Memo on Editing, 28 May 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

In terms of reporting style, the practice of reporting all news items in a direct tone appeared to reduce the personal opinion of the individual monitor or editor. This practice led to more uniform and neutral reporting within the Digest. However, this case study has demonstrated that where significant material was not heard, or a deliberate summary of a talk was made, then an indirect, descriptive tone was not only easier but also on occasion enabled the Monitoring Service to convey the significance of a report to consumers more successfully and in a more concise manner. Different types of item were simply more suited to different styles of reporting.

Secondly, this chapter has demonstrated the procedural and documentary innovations made by the Service since the start of the war, which enabled them to convey different types of monitored items to different types of consumers in the most appropriate and useful way. The developing Flash service assisted consumers for which broadcast material was of most use if received soon after it was originally broadcast. This meant the material sent by Flash consisted primarily of items of military relevance, or items of a propaganda nature that suggested they could be countered in British broadcasts or propaganda. Reflecting the nature of total war, however, Flash items were sometimes applicable to a combination of different uses. This chapter has further shown that the wireless German news agencies were an important source of Flash material.

The Monitoring Report, and War Cabinet Report, which had developed from the early days of the war into a separate document, contained information of a different nature to Flash and provided assistance to a different type of consumer. The focus of these documents was mainly on indications of potential political and military strategic developments, contained within broadcast reports. As with the Flash service, they also concentrated on any new developments, indicative of a nation's change in attitude or policy towards the war. In this sense the Reports added value to monitored items, in that report writers, dedicated to reviewing the world's media each day, were in the best position to identify when items marked an important change of policy. This focus of the Monitoring Report on new material and developments meant it was a useful document for consumers who

did not have the time to read the entire Digest, but had an interest in the wider strategic war and required an overview of international broadcast output.

The Digest, by contrast, was not arranged to highlight new or interesting broadcast items. It rather suited a more specialist consumer, interested in a particular station's, nation's or region's broadcasting, as this was how broadcast reports were arranged. The importance of continuity and reliability of broadcast output within the Digest therefore contrasted with the Flash service and Monitoring Report, which could be more adaptable in reflecting new developments and stories. In some respects, however, the Digest did change and adapt to reflect important military and political changes as the war developed. This was particularly demonstrated by the alteration in the order and grouping together of broadcast categories in the Digest. These alterations to the Digest, however, were made to accord with significant strategic changes. They were not altered to reflect very short-term fluctuations in interest, such as the temporary surge of interest in American broadcasting following the Italian declaration of war.

Chapter 7

Case Study Three D-Day, 1 – 10 June 1944

The whole advance publicity for the long-promised Second Front has produced a psychological condition bordering on hysteria among large sections of the British and U.S people, while it is altogether in vain that Churchill has tried to conduct a war of nerves on Germany.¹

This monitored statement was included in the report of a German European Service bulletin, broadcast on 4 June 1944. The item referred to an apology, issued the previous day by news service Associated Press, for mistakenly sending out a report that the Allied landings in France had already begun. Before Associated Press could issue a retraction of the statement, it had been picked up and retransmitted to the public, by stations in the United States, Germany and the Soviet Union. The explanation provided by Associated Press, that the incorrect report had been sent out by an employee practicing on the tape machine, was questioned by German radio. The BBC Monitoring Report for 5 June, surveying international reaction to the item, cited the above judgement of the German European Service, alongside a claim from Radio Paris, that ‘Yankee speculators’ had engineered the whole episode.²

As with the Gleiwitz incident in September 1939, this Associated Press release illustrated the potential impact and active role that radio broadcasting could play at key moments throughout the war. Also, as with Gleiwitz, this incident had a military and a propaganda dimension. It thus raises a number of questions about the historic role and value of broadcast monitoring, as conducted by the BBC, which this chapter will seek to address.

Firstly, it raises a question as to what kind of intelligence media monitoring could offer in the context of June 1944, when the Allies held the strategic initiative. From the perspective of strategy, and strategic intelligence, the

¹ German European Service (GES): in English: 21.30 4.6.1944, Digest, I, 5 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179. (All times given in double British Summer Time)

² Monitoring Report, 5 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

situation for the Allied and Axis powers in June 1944 were the reverse of September 1939, and more specifically the reverse of spring 1940. Britain and Germany both knew that the Allied landings in France were imminent in early June 1944, just as they had both known of the invasions of Poland and France, in 1939 and 1940. This time, however, it was Britain who knew the exact time, strength and location of the invasion, and Germany who did not. Any valuable intelligence BBC Monitoring could provide on this subject was thus restricted to reporting items with a view to uncovering German beliefs regarding the expected landings. The Allies also held the initiative in Italy and on Germany's eastern front, and the potential value of BBCM reporting was similarly restricted. In relation to the D-Day landings, moreover, Monitoring would have been unaware of the details of official plans for invasion, and of the deliberate campaign of deception conducted by the Allies, under Operation Fortitude. This chapter will thus consider whether or not this lack of knowledge, as to official plans, affected the value of BBC Monitoring's work.

The value of the Monitoring Service in providing indications as to German beliefs regarding Allied military strategy and capabilities, was also perhaps lessened during this period by the existence of Ultra decrypts, supplied by Bletchley Park. These provided direct access to high-ranking German thought processes and convictions regarding the Allied landings. This chapter will thus secondly assess the selection criteria of the Monitoring Service from an historic perspective, to consider whether they still provided data of potential use to their multiple consumers during this period. It will further examine whether the role of the Service in June 1944 was essentially similar or different to that of four years previously.

The incident of the mistaken Associated Press broadcast, on 4 June, finally illustrates the uncertain influence played by the media and media monitoring. As it was, Allied deception attempts over the previous months, or at least the German perception of these, had the unplanned consequence that this potentially dangerous lapse was disregarded as yet another attempt at deliberate deception. The broadcast, two days before the start of the actual invasion, could easily, however, have been interpreted differently, and put Germany on extra alert

against the Allied landing forces. This chapter will thus further consider how the Monitoring Service managed this uncertain element to broadcast media when deciding which items to report to consumers and how to report them.

This chapter will follow the same format as the previous two case studies in order to allow for a direct comparison of the procedure, collection priorities and reporting style of the Monitoring Service in 1944, with the early years of the war. This case study will thus further allow conclusions to be drawn as to how BBC Monitoring, initially created by the efforts and knowledge of key individuals, had managed to adapt and formalise its procedures and priorities since 1940.

Historical Context

For the British public, D-Day represented a reversal of the military and psychological defeat suffered at Dunkirk, four years previously. There had been calls for the opening of a Second Front in Europe, to relieve pressure on the eastern front, ever since Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. It was, however, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, at the end of that year, which transformed the prospect of an eventual military engagement on mainland Europe into a real possibility. Allied military strategy for the war in Europe was first set down at the Casablanca conference in January 1943, when an agreement was reached to embark on a decisive military campaign in northern France by early 1944.³

Planning for Overlord, the name given to the landings in northern France, began in earnest during late 1943, accompanied by a deliberate campaign of deception, designed to encourage German forces to be wrongly deployed. As the campaign approached, the focus of deception attempts, codenamed Fortitude, lay in convincing Germany that the main attack would come across the narrowest part of the Channel, against the Pas de Calais, and that any other attacks were diversionary, including the planned landings in Normandy. The deception

³ For a discussion of D-Day planning: Max Hastings, *Overlord: D-Day and the Battle of Normandy* (New York: Random House, 2006); Alan F. Wilt, 'The Summer of 1944: A comparison of Overlord and Anvil/Dragoon' *Journal of Strategic Studies* 4:2 (1981), pp.187-195.

operations have historically been regarded as successful, although the extent to which Germany would have acted in the same way, in the absence of Allied efforts, has been questioned.⁴ Assessments of the D-Day landings and the military campaign in northern France have been mixed. It took the British six weeks to achieve their D-Day objective, the vital communications centre of Caen, and it took the Americans two months before they managed to break out to the southwest. The relative military performance of Allied and German soldiers in Normandy has been a matter of controversy.⁵ The severity of the Allied aerial bombardment of France and the behaviour of troops following D-Day has further attracted recent criticism on ethical grounds.⁶

Aside from the main operation, Britain managed to secure an agreement at Casablanca for the invasion of Sicily, which took place in July 1943. Both the strategy and military conduct of the Allied campaigns in Sicily and, from 3 September, on mainland Italy, have been criticised. A number of scholars contended that an alternative military strategy, involving Allied landings in France in 1943, would have been more effective and brought the war to an end sooner.⁷ Others have acknowledged that an Italian campaign was more practical, and that it succeeded in diverting German forces from northern France. The Allied campaign's military conduct has, however, still been criticised for its over-optimistic estimates, nationalistic rivalries, lack of resources and failure to pursue tactical advantages as they arose.⁸ Following the fourth, initially

⁴ F. H. Hinsley & C. A. G. Simkins, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 4, *Security and Counter Intelligence* (London: HMSO, 1990), p.244; Michael Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 5, *Strategic Deception* (London: HMSO, 1990), pp.103-133; David Hunt, 'Remarks on a German perspective of Allied deception operations', *Intelligence and National Security* 3:1 (1988), pp.190-194.

⁵ For military accounts of D-Day: Antony Beevor, *D-Day: The Battle for Normandy* (Penguin: London, 2010); Robin Neillands, *The Battle of Normandy* (London: Cassell, 2002); William F. Buckingham, *D-Day: The First 72 Hours* (Stroud: Tempus, 2004). For German perspective: Paul Carell, *Invasion! They're Coming!: German Account of the D-Day Landings and the 80 Days' Battle for France* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, 1995); David C. Isby (ed.), *Fighting the Invasion: The German Army at Day* (London: Greenhill Books, 2000).

⁶ Beevor, *D-Day*.

⁷ John Grigg, *1943: The Victory that Never Was* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1980); Walter Scott Dunn, *Second Front Now 1943: An Opportunity Delayed* (Alabama: Alabama UP, 1980); Mark Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front: American Military Planning and Diplomacy in Coalition Warfare* (London: Greenwood Press, 1977).

⁸ John Strawson, *The Italian Campaign* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1987); Brian Holden Reid, 'The Italian Campaign, 1943-45: A Reappraisal of Allied Generalship', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 13:1 (1990), pp.128-161; Dominick Graham and Shelford Bidwell, *Tug of War: The*

successful, Battle Cassino, members of the US fifth army symbolically entered the city of Rome on the evening of 4 June 1944, but the remaining battle up Italy proved slow and costly. It was 2 May 1945 before a ceasefire finally came into effect in Italy.⁹

Soviet operations against Romania were also in progress during this period, and on 10 June 1944, Stalin launched an offensive on the Leningrad front by bombarding Finnish defences northwest of the city. On 22 June 1944, in accordance with an agreement reached at the Tehran conference, Stalin launched a major eastern offensive against the Belorussian front, to coincide with the western landings. The relative role played by East and West in bringing about German defeat, following the Normandy landings, has been another subject of historic debate.¹⁰

Procedure

Several major institutional changes had taken place within the Monitoring Service since June 1940. In July 1940, the editorial department was relocated from London to the site of the main monitoring unit, then at Wood Norton. At the same time, Flash supervisors from the Information Bureau were officially deployed to the listening rooms to select urgent material at source.¹¹ These two moves marked the formal start of the ‘confessional’ system of monitoring. The monitoring procedure established in July 1940, following these moves, remained largely unaltered for the remainder of the war, despite the relocation of BBC Monitoring from Wood Norton to Caversham in 1943.

Monitors firstly listened and recorded the bulletins allotted to them, whilst making notes. They then gave a resumé of the bulletin to a Flash supervisor who

Battle for Italy, 1943-1945 (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1986).

⁹ Reid, ‘Italian Campaign’, p.157.

¹⁰ Richard Overy, for instance, claimed that the decisive operations in the battle for Europe took place in the East, whereas Phillips O’Brien argued that, from mid-1944, the West tied down and destroyed a larger share of German resources. (Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (London: Pimlico, 1996); Phillips O’Brien, ‘East versus West in the Defeat of Nazi Germany’, *Journal of Strategic Studies* 23:2 (2000), pp.89-113.)

¹¹ Memo OI & MEX to DoI, 26 June 1940, BBC:WAC R13/169/2; Memo Phillips to DMS, 5 Nov. 1940, BBC:WAC R13/169/3.

told them which items, if any, were to be sent by Flash. Monitors were also encouraged to use their broadcasting knowledge to take a proactive role in suggesting potential Flash items to supervisors.¹² After ‘confessing’ to a supervisor, monitors requested a typist from the typing room and dictated their report to them using their notes and the record, transcribing any items identified as Flash first. As soon as the Flashes were transcribed, a copy was taken to the Flash supervisor for teleprinting, and other copies were deposited for the use of the editorial and index sections. The rest of the items in the bulletin would then be reported by the monitor and typed out. Copies of the completed reports would again be sent to both the editorial and index sections.¹³

The index section was an amalgamation of two formerly separate departments: headlines and index records. Headlines were another innovation dating back to July 1940. By the time of the previous case study, in June 1940, the Monitoring Service had developed a formal system for identifying repeated, amplified and variant items in the Digest. The German occupation of Europe by that point, however, had greatly increased the number of repeated items listened to from German-controlled stations. To save valuable transcription time, a headlines section was created to help monitors identify repeat items before they wrote their bulletin reports.¹⁴ For this period, the index section covered broadcasts from Italy, and some broadcasts from Vichy France and Japan, as well as from all German-occupied stations. Copies of all monitors’ transcripts, of transmissions covered by the index, were handed into the index section as soon as they had been typed. One of these copies was used for the indexing process and the other went to a ‘slugger’, who assigned each item in the broadcast with a ‘slug’, or descriptive headline, and also typed these on to headline sheets. Once a headlines sheet was completed it was returned to the listening room, where monitors could use it to check which items had already been reported that day. Monitors were thus expected to read themselves into each shift by consulting these headline sheets. There was an average time lag of ten to 15 minutes between monitors submitting their reports and the items contained in them being

¹² R Seth, ‘A Short Explanation of the Work of Flash Supervisors’, 3 Sep. 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

¹³ ‘Introduction to New Typists’, n.d. (c. Sept. 1940), BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

¹⁴ Note on Headlines Monitoring Unit, Apr. 1942, BBC:WAC E8/208/1.

made available for consultation on the sheets. If monitors suspected an item that they heard was a repeat from a previous day, they could also consult the index section itself, which maintained a cumulative, central index.¹⁵

The processes for producing the Daily Digests and Monitoring Report had not changed significantly since June 1940, but a new document, 'Index of the Daily Digest of World Broadcasts', was also prepared on a daily basis during this period. This listed the headlines of items included in that day's Digest under selected index headings. It also included the station, language and time of the broadcast, as well as the category of the Digest in which the full item could be located and read. This document thus addressed the previous limitations of the Digest by meeting the needs of consumers interested in items that related to a particular subject, country or military front. For instance, on 2 June 1944, those interested in items concerning air bombardment in France could look under heading 'Air War' and sub-heading 'France' and find a list of 22 items, including:

Angers Bishop Condemns Terror Raids R.Par. Fren. 12.50 (1C)¹⁶

The reader could then consult section C of part one of the Daily Digest and find the report of the broadcast, in French, from German-controlled Radio Paris, broadcast at 12.50 on 1 June 1944, and read the full report of the item in question. The index of the Daily Digest of World Broadcast also listed repeats, amplifications and variations of broadcast items, although repeated items were also still frequently listed under reports of individual bulletins within the Digests.

Collection Priorities

For this period, BBC Monitoring employees faced the difficult task of keeping track of developments relating to three different military fronts, whilst also seeking to maintain and convey an integrated picture of broadcasting trends. An examination of the reports produced by the Service provides an insight into the

¹⁵ 'Amalgamation of Headlines & Index Records' n.d.; 'Index Section 1943-1945', Apr. 1945, both BBC:WAC E8/208/1; Refer to Chapter 2 for an account of the central index, pp.97-98.

¹⁶ Index of Digest, II June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

perspective from which broadcast material was seen as having value to consumers. The criteria by which Monitoring selected items for immediate Flash transmission, daily surveyed broadcasting trends in the Monitoring Report, and arranged and prioritised broadcast reports in the Daily Digests, will all be considered.

Flash

The operation of the ‘confessional’ system during this period has made it possible to identify items selected for Flash transmission, as these were the items for which teleprint slips are present in the BBC Monitoring transcript collection. Examining large numbers of these teleprint slips, from an historic perspective, has enabled this study to offer some deductions as to the reason behind the selection of particular broadcast items during this period.

A wartime note explaining the work of Flash supervisors, stated that the Flash service provided items of ‘intelligence’ for the Service departments and various government ministries, and ‘news’, for the BBC. The note also added, however, that ‘intelligence and points for propaganda’ were often gleaned from implication:

The Flash Supervisors, by reason of their training and special knowledge of affairs and requirements, are able to read implications into items which may appear to the Monitor to be an uninteresting, or even useless, item.¹⁷

This statement is interesting in light of the imposed distinction between ‘intelligence’ and ‘news’, because the document also made clear that ‘points for propaganda’ were selected for the BBC. The distinctive definition of intelligence, given here, was thus solely that it was information selected for the Government, even though it was acknowledged that the process for providing Flash ‘intelligence’ was identical to that used for providing Flash ‘points for propaganda’ to the BBC.

¹⁷ R Seth, ‘A Short Explanation of the Work of Flash Supervisors’, 3 Sep. 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1.

This section is thus divided into items that were selected for their ‘intelligence’ value, which was almost solely of a military nature during this period, and items selected for their ‘propaganda’ value. This section will also, however, discuss the difficulties in dividing Flash items in this way, due to the similar method by which they were identified, and also due to the interconnected wartime flow and use of BBC Monitoring, as described in chapter one.

i. Military Intelligence

Items that revealed international beliefs regarding the Allied landings in the west or anticipated Soviet offensive in the east were selected for Flash during this period, as were items that provided details as to the progress of fighting on the French and Italian fronts.

Prior to 6 June landings, the Monitoring Service flashed speculations regarding the time and location of the invasion, and also reports about German defensive preparations against attack. The latter could be linked to an assessment of beliefs regarding the location of the attack, as illustrated by the following German item, monitored on 5 June:

A four-fold defensive belt against any enemy attacks has also been created in the southernmost part of France along the Bay of Biscay.¹⁸

In December 1943, the Allies had agreed to launch a separate landing in the south of France. This did not take place until mid-August 1944, several months after D-Day. Military appreciations from this period have, however, revealed German anxieties about an attack on southern France, and a German Panzer division stationed in southern France had to be transferred to Normandy after the invasion began.¹⁹ Items regarding the location of Allied bombing in France were further selected for Flash prior to the invasion. This was also on occasion due to the potential insight they offered into German beliefs regarding the location of

¹⁸ GES: In English: 18.30 5 May 1944, IWM: BBC MST A137.

¹⁹ Mary Barbier, *D-day deception: Operation Fortitude and the Normandy Invasion* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007), pp.18; 170; Stephen E. Ambrose, *D-Day, June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II* (Simon & Schuster: New York, 1994), p.104.

the Allied landings, such as an item from Radio Paris: 'Nord and pas de Calais were chief objectives of the Anglo-American air force this morning'.²⁰ On 6 June, an item was flashed, which appeared to indicate a German realisation as to the true focus of the invasion landings:

Reports received a short time ago stated that the operations started by the Anglo-Americans in the region of Le Havre had not the magnitude at first attributed to them. In fact the main Allied effort seems to be concentrated on the Cotentin peninsula, which is understandable, considering that Eisenhower cannot afford to underestimate the importance of Cherbourg.²¹

An item flashed from a German broadcast to the Soviet Union on 8 September further clarified the German realisation: 'Formations at Calais and Dunkirk apparently had the task of misleading the German defence, since they have not attempted to land there.'²² Germany still, however, harboured doubts that the main attack was yet to come, and indications of German beliefs regarding Allied strategy were flashed for the remainder of this period.²³

Items relating to an expected Russian offensive were also selected for Flash during this period, although not as many as those on the Normandy landings. A Flash item, broadcast from Germany on 9 June, indicated German beliefs as to the invasion: 'Anglo-Saxon propaganda proclaims daily that a great Soviet offensive is imminent. It looks as if it is the Kremlin's turn to play now.'²⁴ Another Flash, selected from a Soviet broadcast, linked a warning as to the future eastern offensive to the events in northern France:

Large and striking posters have appeared on the streets of Moscow with the words "The hour of retribution is drawing near"... [T]he posters show Hitler looking with horror at the guns pointed at him from the east by the Red Army and from the west by the British and Americans.²⁵

²⁰ Radio Paris (Germany): 22.00 3 June 1944; Also: Paris (Information Permanente): 00.30 5 June 1944. This news agency report was included verbatim in Radio Paris: 08.00 5 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST E62.

²¹ Radio Paris: 14.00 6 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST E62.

²² GES: in Russian: 12.00 8 June 1944, IWM: BBC WAC E82.

²³ Thaddeus Holt, *The Deceivers: Allied Military Deception in the Second World War* (Skyhorse Publishing: New York, 2007), p.584.

²⁴ GES: In French: 18.20 9 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST E62.

²⁵ Soviet European Service: In English: 13.40 9 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST K15.

A considerable proportion of Flash items, from German-controlled radio, also provided military details of the Allied advance through Italy, and from 6 June, of fighting in Normandy.

During the first days of June, items on the military advance towards Rome were selected: 'There is fighting in the neighbourhood of Rome, north of the Alban Hills, while west of these same hills the German Forces withdraw behind the Tiber.'²⁶ Bulletins that gave details as to the positioning of German defences in Italy were selected for Flash:

German Grenadiers have taken up mountain positions north of Frosinone. The withdrawal of German troops as far as Sora is expected as there mountain chains lend themselves to a more effective defence.²⁷

As in 1940, German-controlled broadcasts on the damage caused by Allied bombing were conveyed by Flash, such as an item on the bombing of Turin, broadcast on 4 June.²⁸ It is difficult to discern the exact reason for the selection of such items, for they provided details of the buildings hit and were thus potentially useful in assessing the accuracy of targeted bombing. They could also, however, have been chosen for their potential value in the propaganda battle, should the buildings or areas, claimed to have been hit, be discovered to be undamaged. An item on Italian radio, which provided cumulative totals as to the number of Allied bombing raids, damage inflicted on buildings and casualties caused, was selected for Flash on 3 June.²⁹ Such an item did not have any clear military value but could have been of interest to the Air Ministry in tracking the public image of the Service.

²⁶ Radio Paris (Germany): 24.00 4 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST E62.

²⁷ Rome (German Controlled): 07.00 1 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST D77.

²⁸ Italian Home Service (Fascist Government): 23.00 4 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST D77.

²⁹ Italian Home Service (Fascist Government): 23.00 3 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST D77.

Following the Allied entry into Rome, the number of Flashes about fighting on the Italian Front began to decrease as the issue was sidelined by developments in northern France.³⁰

Reports of military events within France were frequently selected for Flash.³¹ The telegraph services were a frequent source of Flash material on the progress of the invasion, as with an item from Transocean for the Far East: 'Officially announced that the German stronghold at Douvres withstood all assaults. West of Douvres a fierce tank battle is raging.'³² As was the case in 1940, these Flash items drawn from news agency reports were frequently 'spiked' following transmission and not included in the Digest. This was the case for the following item, which also illustrated that reports on shipping were still regarded as important to Flash:

A large number of Anglo-American ships of various tonnage has been sighted off the mouth of the Orne, obviously bringing reinforcements for the bridgehead established north of Bayeux. Fifteen cruisers and 50-60 destroyers are signalled to the west of le Havre.³³

Reports on the fate of Allied troops in Normandy were flashed. An item from Belgium, on 6 June, stated that all but six of a regiment of paratroops, who landed near Caen, had lost their lives. The Flash further provided the detail that the Polish sergeant in charge of the party had surrendered to the Germans.³⁴ A further piece of interesting intelligence, selected for Flash during this period, related to the activities of the French resistance, who had been ordered to conduct reprisal attacks once the Allied invasion began.³⁵ It is striking that Monitoring employees picked up on the importance of this seemingly innocuous report:

³⁰ Occasional item still flashed: Italian Home Service (Fascist Government): 07.00 5 June 1944; Italian Home Service (Enemy controlled): 20.00 8 June 1944, both IWM: BBC MST D77.

³¹ For instance, GES: In French: 13.16 6 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST E62.

³² German Telegraph Service (Transocean): In English for Far East: 13.32 8 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST A137.

³³ Paris (Information Permanente): 07.40 7 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST E62.

³⁴ Belgian Home Service: In French: 22.00 6 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST E62. Similar items: Transocean: In English for Far East: 13.30 8 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST A137; French Home Service: 20.00 9 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST E62.

³⁵ On evening 5 June, a coded British wireless message was sent on the BBC, instructing Resistance operatives to cut railway lines throughout France. (Martin Gilbert, *The Second World War* (London: Pheonix, 2009), p.532.

An important cycle race in Haute-Vienne on Sunday morning in Limoges. Among the competitors were several well-known cyclists. When they and their escort of cars Croisille-sur-Briance, 45km. from Limoges, they were stopped by a Communist gang, which took all the cars and bicycles except one.³⁶

ii. Propaganda

The items mentioned above were selected for Flash, either because they provided indications of German beliefs regarding the Allied invasion in the west and Soviet offensive in the east, or because they provided military updates on the situation in Italy and France. Another category of items selected for Flash during this period, sought to provide information of relevance to the information war.

There were especial concerns regarding the attitude of the French population, who would be most immediately affected by the D-Day landings. This resulted in a number of items in German broadcasts to France being selected for Flash transmission. These included items on the Allied bombing of northern France, such as an item on the destruction of Rouen cathedral:

You can be proud of yourselves gentlemen of the Allied air force... You certainly do not care if Rouen is on fire and if France loses her historical treasures. France has one cathedral less and London and Washington have committed one more crime.³⁷

A report of an interview with Allied POWs, broadcast on the French home service, was also flashed as it provided an indication of the French population's attitude towards the Allies: '[P]risoners... stated that they noted among the civil population of the coastal region marked hostility towards Anglo-Americans.'³⁸ The practice of broadcasting POW names was actually linked into German propaganda regarding the Allied air attacks, as illustrated by a Flash sent on 3 June: '[A] special notice, warning listeners that in future only the names of those aviators who had been taken prisoner before the murderous terror-attacks on

³⁶ Belgium Home Service: In French: 13.00 6 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST E62.

³⁷ Radio Paris: 09.00 2 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST E62; Also: Radio Paris: 14.00 6 June 1944, both IWM: BBC MST E62.

³⁸ French Home Service: 08.00 9 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST E62.

civilians began would be given.’³⁹ The reason for the new policy, clarified during a similar broadcast the following day, was the ‘shooting at defenceless civilians... in low-level attacks’.⁴⁰

Concern for the moral standing of the Allies also explains why a number of items relating to the status of Rome as an open city were selected for Flash. The issue was first raised in a flashed German new agency transmission in the early hours of 4 June.⁴¹ BBC Monitoring tracked the issue as it developed, flashing an item later that day, which revealed that the Italian Government had developed a more threatening tone on the subject:

It is not yet known whether the U.S. command will recognise Rome as an open city, despite the fact that no German troops are left there. The general impression however, prevails that Gen. Alexander wants to use Rome as a base for future operations. In that case the Allies would have to accept full responsibility for the inevitable destruction to which Rome would be subjected.⁴²

In regard to the Soviet Front, a number of items on economic life, broadcast from German radio, were flashed. An item entitled, ‘Herbs, Roots as Food in Russia’ was one of only two news items reported by Monitoring for a transmission on the German Service to Russia:

The Council of People’s Commissars of the U.S.S.R. ordered the gathering of wild herbs and roots on a large scale. These herbs are to be considered valuable food products and will take an important part in the food supply.⁴³

The other item, selected in this broadcast, reported an interview with two American journalists who had recently visited the Soviet Union and reported the, ‘catastrophic situation in the Soviet rear’, which was the result, ‘not only of the present exhausting war, but of the entire Soviet political and economic system.’⁴⁴

³⁹ German Overseas Service (GOS): In English for N. America: 15.30 3 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST A137.

⁴⁰ GOS: In English for N. America: 15.30 4 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST A137.

⁴¹ Paris Information Permanente: 01.26 4 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST E62.

⁴² Italian Home Service (Fascist Government): 13.00 4 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST D77.

⁴³ GES: In Russian: 12.00 4 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST E82.

⁴⁴ GES: In Russian: 12.00 4 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST E82.

This latter item made the selection of the first seem due to propaganda reasons; that it indicated Germany was trying to convince the Russian people that the country was starving and on the brink of collapse. All items selected for another broadcast on 1 June also concentrated on panic in the Soviet Union, for instance: ‘A hunger and peace demonstration was recently held in a village in Grozny province.’⁴⁵ These items clearly represented Flash items, which were selected as ‘points for propaganda’, which could be gleaned by implication.

Monitoring Report

The size of the Monitoring Report varied considerably, from a standard five to six pages at either end of this period, to eleven pages for the 7 June. This reflected the importance of the events, and international reaction towards, the 6 June D-Day landings. The reports followed all potentially new developments covered in monitored broadcasts, for instance the earlier reports for this period tracked items relating to the situation in Bulgaria, where the former Bulgarian premier had been replaced and a new Cabinet formed.⁴⁶ The focus of the Reports for this period, however, was on developments relating to the three military fronts: the D-Day landings in northern France, the Allied advance in Italy and developments in the east.

As in June 1940, the Monitoring Report sought, through its selection and presentation of monitored material, to identify new strategic developments in the military, political and information war. During this period, however, due to the fact the Allies held the initiative, the information provided was more about indications of international, and especially German, beliefs as to Allied strategy. Furthermore, the impending nature of major military developments, in both West and East, meant that a division between strategic and tactical military intelligence was harder to draw.

⁴⁵ GES: In Russian: 12.00 1 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST E82.

⁴⁶ Monitoring Report, 2 June 1944; Monitoring Report, 3 June 1944; Monitoring Report, 4 June 1944, all IWM: BBC MSD 179.

A new 'Listening Notes' section was included in the Monitoring Reports for this period. This noted any new broadcasts or alterations to existing transmissions, and thus reported relevant findings of the Special Listening Section to consumers. The 7 June report stated that Allied-controlled broadcasts from Rome had been heard for the first time the previous day, and added that the wavelength of the new transmissions was the same as the one used by the alternate Fascist-controlled programme.⁴⁷ Technical data was thus used, as during the German advance at the beginning of the war, to provide information of both military and propaganda relevance, as the location of the front line altered on a daily basis.

i. Strategic Intelligence

The Report firstly surveyed speculation from German-controlled stations regarding the time, type and location of the Allied landings in France, and anticipated Soviet offensive.

The impending Allied landings were the second story covered in 2 June Monitoring Report. A DNB agency item was identified, which stated that the recent build-up of Corsica was indicative of an Allied plan to use troops stationed in North Africa to launch an invasion through southern France.⁴⁸ The same Report also, however, identified a general absence of referrals to the invasion: 'With the exception of broadcasts from France there was no considerable output from German-controlled sources on the coming invasion of Europe'.⁴⁹ This demonstrated the particular value of the Monitoring Report, above both the Flash Service, which only brought consumers' attention to items that had been broadcast, and the Digest, which was too large for consumers to make easy deductions about the proportion of broadcast time that had been devoted to an issue. The 2 June Monitoring Report identified an item from Lisbon on 1 June, which had incorrectly claimed that the Allied invasion had begun. The Associated Press report, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter,

⁴⁷ Monitoring Report, 7 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁴⁸ Monitoring Report, 2 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁴⁹ Monitoring Report, 3 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

was also brought to the attention of consumers in the 4 June Report.⁵⁰ Reports of German defensive preparations in northern France were further quoted in 6 June Report.⁵¹

In contrast to Reports up to and including the 6 June issue, the enlarged 11-page Report for 7 June was devoted almost exclusively to the Allied landings. It stated that news of the invasion had first been relayed by overseas and European agency transmissions (Transocean in Spanish 07.00 and DNB for Europe 07.00), whilst the first voice transmission was a 07.30 bulletin for German Forces in Norway.⁵² German beliefs about the nature of the invasion were then surveyed. A broadcast from military commentator von Olberg was reported:

[He] reflected a suspicion, frequently expressed earlier and even later in the day, that the “Third Front” was a “diversionary move to tie down forces, and that by the use of tremendous material, the German Command is to be deceived and to be made to carry out premature movements of troops.”⁵³

The report writers continued to look out for items on this theme. The following 8 June Report began with a quote from an NBC commentator: ‘The German radio and Press this morning reflected the confusion into which the invasion has thrown the Nazi military leaders.’ The writers further stated that the large volume of reports issued from German news agencies supported the commentator’s assumption about Germany’s confusion.⁵⁴ The fact that Nazi broadcasting had been thrown into confusion by the Allied landings was commented on for the remainder of the period studied.⁵⁵ This sense of confusion pervaded the Monitoring Report itself. Report writers still attempted, however, to report on the details included in German broadcasts, and sought to summarise any consistent elements, as shown in 11 June Report:

⁵⁰ Monitoring Report, 2 June 1944; Monitoring Report, 4 June 1944, both IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁵¹ Monitoring Report, 6 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁵² Monitoring Report, 7 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Monitoring Report, 8 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁵⁵ Monitoring Report, 9 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179; Monitoring Report, 11 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 180.

Recurrent arguments, emanating from the spokesman of the German High Command, were that the Allied enterprise was only in its preliminary phase, that it had already proved extremely costly, that the initial objective had not been attained and that further landings were to be expected.⁵⁶

The Allied landings in France, the question of a future Russian offensive, and especially German speculation on the subject, was also a clear priority for report writers. The 2 June Report declared that: 'Enemy sources [had] devoted increasing attention to the new operations on the Eastern Front'. Details of Hitler's communiqué on fighting in the area north of Jassy were provided, as were speculations regarding a potential Soviet offensive in northern Scandinavia.⁵⁷ A section entitled 'Impending Russian Offensive', in 3 June Report, confirmed the perceived importance of the issue, regardless of whether it occupied a significant proportion of monitored broadcasts: 'There was but a meagre output from Germany on Eastern Front fighting.'⁵⁸

With the fall of Rome and then the Allied invasion, the eastern front was neglected during the following issues of the report, but in the final issue for this period, an item from Finnish radio, which announced the commencement of a 'general offensive' by the Russians on the Karelian Sector, was discussed. The Report stated that Germany's overseas agency correspondent had appeared to accept the veracity of the Finish report and had only reserved judgement on how large the attack had been.⁵⁹ The Monitoring Report seems to indicate that report writers themselves were also unsure as to the veracity of the report, which presented a difficulty in that they did not know how much significance to attach to the issue.

⁵⁶ Monitoring Report, 11 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 180.

⁵⁷ Monitoring Report, 2 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST 179.

⁵⁸ Monitoring Report, 3 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁵⁹ Monitoring Report, 11 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 180.

ii. Propaganda

In addition to reporting on statements regarding Allied military strategy, the Monitoring Report sought to survey broadcasting trends regarding events in France and Italy.

Indications of the developing attitude of European countries, towards the Allied landings, were examined first. An item quoted in the 2 June Report, entitled 'Political Survey for German propagandists abroad', suggested that the recent replacement by Allied propagandists of the word 'invasion' for 'liberation' had been made because of 'the increasingly unfriendly attitude towards the Allies in France and other countries within the invasion orbit.'⁶⁰ On 3 June, report writers further related that broadcasts from France had warned French listeners of the fate that would befall them in the event of invasion.⁶¹

Following the D-Day landings, the Monitoring Reports continued to track propaganda directed towards the French population. The 8 June Report declared that: 'A certain confliction of aims was apparent in propaganda broadcasts from French stations.' On the one hand, the report continued, the French were reminded of 'Petain's and Laval's appeals for calm, and exhorted to avoid civil war', and on the other hand were told to, 'Attack all saboteurs' and 'Hunt down the traitors who are trying to undermine the morale of our formations.'⁶² The 11 June Report informed consumers that further efforts had been made from the German side, 'to suggest unfavourable reactions by the French people to the presence of the Allied invasion troops.' It also related how Germany was presenting the horror of the fighting in Normandy, and summarised a DNB report for Europe: 'A lurid account of the Allied bombing of Caen, with sympathy for the "terribly frightened" civilian residents'.⁶³

With regard to the situation in Italy, the Monitoring Report focused on providing a news and propaganda survey of how the military action was being

⁶⁰ Monitoring Report, 2 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁶¹ Monitoring Report, 3 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁶² Monitoring Report, 8 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁶³ Monitoring Report, 11 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 180.

internationally reported. The Reports from 2 June to 6 June all began with a survey of broadcast reaction to the battle in Italy. The sole exception to this rule was the 3 June issue, which started with a short account of ‘air atrocity’ stories from German stations, before proceeding to discuss the situation in Italy.⁶⁴ The 2 June Report assessed how German radio had reported the Italian battle to different audiences: ‘German agency reports for consumption outside the Reich were somewhat franker than broadcasts for the German people in their admissions of Allied progress.’⁶⁵ The 3 June Report continued on the theme, noting that German home broadcasts were now making guarded admissions of Allied advances on the Italian Front but were, ‘notably sparing in the mention of place-names’. The report writers also noted that agency commentaries for use outside the Reich were again, ‘less reticent than the material put out for home consumption.’⁶⁶

The 5 June Report stated that German agency transmissions had finally, that morning, announced Hitler’s order to withdraw troops from Rome.⁶⁷ Broadcasts directed towards French listeners, it was noted, had presented the future Allied advance into Rome as: ‘anti-Christian and pagan troops’ set to ‘storm the Christian capital.’ In this regard, the Report also picked up on an issue that had elicited a number of Flash reports: whether or not the Allies would recognise Rome as an open city.⁶⁸ The following, 6 June Report led with the story of ‘The Fall of Rome’:

To the exclusion of almost every other topical matter, the German propaganda machine yesterday concentrated on the subject of Rome, and an immense total output was achieved.⁶⁹

The Report summarised the main German reaction to the news - that Germany had lost little by abandoning Rome - and quoted various monitored items which claimed that Hitler had been motivated by a sense of responsibility to prevent the destruction of the city. German broadcasts, which portrayed the Allies as

⁶⁴ Monitoring Report, 3 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁶⁵ Monitoring Report, 2 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁶⁶ Monitoring Report, 3 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST 179.

⁶⁷ Monitoring Report, 5 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST 179.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Monitoring Report, 6 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST 179.

barbarous for their refusal to recognise Rome as an open city were further quoted, as were broadcasts from Spain and Tokyo, which had been supportive of the German withdrawal.⁷⁰ A very small section in 7 June Report stated that ‘German propaganda on the loss of Rome [had] dwindled in quantity’, and the 8 June Report again only contained a small section on the Italian front, informing readers that the ‘German Communiqué had made frank admissions of Allied progress beyond Rome.’⁷¹ Following the Normandy landings, report writers concentrated on the western front. This partly reflected the pattern of broadcasting itself, for, as the 11 June Report confirmed, operations on the Italian front had received little attention in German broadcasting.⁷²

Digest

The Digest, now entitled ‘Daily Digest of World Broadcasts’, reflected the extent to which German power had extended throughout Europe, even since 1940. The Digests from this period also reflected the growth of BBC Monitoring itself, especially in its coverage of new agency transmissions.

i. Arrangement of Items

The Digest was still issued in two parts, with part one covering all transmissions from German and German-occupied territory and part two covering transmissions from all other destinations. During this period, however, each part covered the 24-hour period from 00.01 the previous morning to 00.01 on the day of issue, instead of 03.00 – 03.00 as in June 1940. The second part of the Digest will not be considered for this case study, for it remained almost entirely unaltered from its June 1940 format. The only notable difference was that the first category in the publication, previously called ‘French Home Transmissions’, had been changed to broadcasts from ‘Vichy France’.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Monitoring Report, 7 June 1944; Monitoring Report, 8 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST 179.

⁷² Monitoring Report, 11 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST 180.

Part one of the Digest comprised between 83 and 109 pages of content during this period.⁷³ One of the main alterations in the arrangement of items since June 1940 was the amalgamation of former categories 1D: 'Germany for Occupied Territory' and 1M: 'From Occupied Territory' into a new category 1D. The countries included in this 'Occupied Territory' category had also grown, reflecting German expansion in the east and Balkans. During this period, reports of broadcasts from and to Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece, Finland, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia were all included in category 1D, whereas they had either been listed as broadcasts from neutrals in 1940 or had not been monitored at all. Reflecting this move, category 1F, which had previously been entitled 'Germany for Neutrals in Europe', now only included reports of German broadcasts to Eire, Sweden, Portugal and Spain.

The other categories remained similar to June 1940. There was, however, more emphasis on German Services to the Forces. Reports to German Forces and Forces in the U.K. were both listed as sub-categories on the contents page. German broadcasts to North and South America had also been separated into two categories, and broadcasts from Canada were included for the first time, alongside those from the USA. Finally, German transmissions to USSR were regularly monitored in 1944, whereas they had not been in 1940, and reports of such broadcasts were included within a new category 1M.⁷⁴

Statistically, German home broadcasts still occupied a considerable proportion of part one of the Digest, between 12 and 18 percent, as did broadcasts directed towards the UK, between 16 and 24 percent.⁷⁵ Broadcasts from and to occupied territories, also took up between 16 and 24 percent.⁷⁶ Reports of broadcasts to France took up a modest proportion of between five and eight percent, but all

⁷³ 2 June Digest: 83 pages; 9 & 11 June Digest: 109 pages. 5 June Digest has been omitted from statistics, as at only 63 pages it represents a significant anomaly. The shortness of the report was due to the small number of Telegraph Service reports, only eight against an average of 28 pages. IWM: BBC MSD 179 & 180.

⁷⁴ See Appendix 6 for a table of contents for part I of Digest for 2 June 1944.

⁷⁵ Lowest 4 June: 12% (12/103pages); Highest 6 June: 18% (15/82), IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁷⁶ Lowest 3 June: 16% (16/97) and 4 June: 16% (16/103); Highest 7 June: 24% (24/102), IWM: BBC MSD 179.

broadcasts from Vichy France and French colonies were included in part two.⁷⁷ All other categories of broadcast reports only occupied between zero and five percent of Digest space.⁷⁸ The most dramatic alteration, since 1940, was the percentage of the Digest occupied by German telegraph service reports, which was between 24 and 33 percent.⁷⁹

ii. Content and Omitted Material

The collection priorities of Monitoring remained focused on the reporting of news bulletins, special reports and talks. Items such as songs, poems, limericks and jokes were rarely reported, although the fact that these had been included in a broadcast was occasionally mentioned if it was felt they provided an important indication of the tone of a transmission.⁸⁰

Monitors and editors could exercise most discretion in reporting broadcasts monitored for important items only. Broadcasts monitored in this way were indicated in the Digest with the acronym 'M.I.I.O.'. Items selected from broadcasts monitored in this way usually conveyed a new item of news or new broadcast development. Items related to the D-Day landings made up a significant number of such items for this period. Monitored items regarding the disfavoured attitude of the French civilian population to the Allies were selected for Flash transmission, from a German broadcast, on 8 June. All but one of these items were omitted from the Digest, because similar items had been subsequently broadcast from regularly monitored transmissions. The only item subsequently reported in the Digest represented a new item of news, which

⁷⁷ Lowest 8 June: 5% (5/98); Highest 2 June: 8% (7/83) and 4 June: 8% (8/103), IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁷⁸ Lowest: No reports included for Far East on 3, 4 & 8 June; for Africa on 2 June; for USA & Canada on 2 June; for Central & South America on 6, 7, 8 & 10 June; or for USSR on 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 on 10 June. Highest: Reports of German broadcasts for Near & Middle East and India occupied 5% of Digest (5/109 pages) on 9 June, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁷⁹ Lowest 4 June: 24% (25/103); Highest 7 June: 33% (34/102), IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁸⁰ For instance: German Home Service (GHS): In German: 07.30 3 June 1944, Digest, I, 4 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179; GES: In English: 19.30 BST 7 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST A137.

concerned the use of Liberty bank notes, by the Allies in Normandy, to ‘cheat French civilians’.⁸¹

The details of some items on agricultural, economic and industrial subjects were not reported extensively by monitors or included in the Digest. German broadcast items on the subject of agriculture, including talks on vegetable cultivation and chicken keeping, were summarised by a monitor on 9 June but not included in the Digest.⁸² The details of a broadcast from Germany on the reorganisation of Hungary’s agriculture were also not included in the Digest. The missing details included information on sugar beet, the amount of acres under cultivation and the number of animals from Prussian breeding farms that had been sent to Hungary.⁸³ Furthermore, the news that weekly butter rations in Australia had been reduced was spiked from a report on 1 June, and an account of the characteristics and smelting of iron ore was not reported extensively on 9 June.⁸⁴ Items on the subject of sport were not reported unless they had another dimension, such as providing information as to general laws and regulations. A monitor reported a Danish item on the Copenhagen Society for Rowing Sports, because it contained the news that permission for rowing in the harbour had been extended.⁸⁵

In contrast to the start of the war, the Service frequently reported items of local news in Europe, even in bulletins monitored for important items only.⁸⁶ These items had perhaps taken on increased significance due to the advent of the Allied landings and anticipated progress across Europe. News of events within Britain, however, was still frequently spiked.⁸⁷ Messages from British POWs were still

⁸¹ GES: In English for Eire: 20.45 8 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST A337; Digest, I, 9 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁸² Frankfurt (Germany): In German for Germany: 11.50 9 June 1944; Cologne (Germany): In German for Germany: 11.45 9 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST A337; Digest, I, 10 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁸³ GES: In English for Eire: 18.15 1 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST A137; Digest, I, 2 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁸⁴ Transocean (Germany): In English: 19.36 1 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST A137; GHS: 07.30 9 June 1944, Digest, I, 10 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁸⁵ Danish Home Service: 21.45 10 June 1944, Digest, I, 11 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 180.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Transocean (Germany): In English: 17.22 1 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST A137.

recorded by BBC Monitoring during this period, but were no longer reported in the Digest, unless deemed of general interest.⁸⁸

Reporting Style

An examination of the reporting style used by BBC Monitoring in June 1944 reveals the extent to which the Service had managed to minimise the inconsistencies in style, and reliance on individual monitors' and editors' judgement, which was apparent in June 1940. From these findings, it will be possible to draw some general conclusions about the role and operation of broadcast monitoring within the context of World War Two.

Style & Summarisation

The style used for reporting different types of broadcast item within the Digest was still subject to variation.⁸⁹ News bulletins were reported in a direct style, as previously. However, there was no uniform practice for reporting special items, such as Front Reports or talks by news commentators and broadcast personalities.

In general, the more extensively a broadcast was reported, the more likely it was to have been written in a direct style. The content of any sections in an original broadcast, which were omitted from a report, were usually indicated briefly in brackets. The Digest report of a talk on the Dutch home service included the statement: 'Familiar derogatory details about U.S. class privileges', and a large section of a monitor's two and a half page report of a German transmission was replaced in the Digest with: 'Familiar comment on loss of Britain's overseas investments, Lease-Lend, and U.S. annexation of Canada'.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ BBC: MST A137.

⁸⁹ See case study one for a table explaining reporting style, p.188.

⁹⁰ Dutch Home Service: 19.00 10 June 1944, Digest, I, 11 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 180; GOS: In English for S. & E. Asia and Africa: 10.05 1 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST 137; Digest, I, 2 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

Different reporting styles were still occasionally used within the Digest to report a single broadcast item. The Digest version of a German front report began in an indirect, descriptive style and then switched without warning, in the second sentence, to a direct style:

The reporter describes the peaceful beauty of Russia in the spring. Suddenly, flames leap up among the hawthorn hedge and trails of smoke from dark clouds in the spring sky to remind one that this is a fighting zone.⁹¹

The change in style here demonstrates the continued attempt of monitors to convey the tone of broadcasting, as well as its content, in the most concise manner possible. The Digests and monitoring transcripts produced during this period particularly illustrate the continued challenges faced by Monitoring employees in attempting to strike the correct balance between tone and content, when summarising material. One monitor summarised a 14-minute talk from Germany, by providing a short account of its content, and the order in which each subject was discussed:

After discussing the naming of the U.S.A., mentioning the Declaration of 1776, the talk dealt with developments in the 19th century, and their effect on the Indians, the use of negro slave labour on cotton plantations and ended in mentioning the incorporation of those states which had belonged to Mexico.⁹²

Other summaries provided even less of the detail of the original content of the talk and placed more emphasis on communicating the meaning of the broadcast as a whole. An item entitled, 'Burma's Defence of Freedom', was thus summarised in the Digest as follows:

A long, detailed story of the bravery of a Burmese corporal who, single-handed, killed five Englishmen. This showed the risks they are willing to take in defence of Burma's freedom and independence.⁹³

⁹¹ GHS: 11.40 5 June 1944, Digest, I, 6 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁹² GHS: 07.30 7 June 1944, Digest, I, 8 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁹³ Free India (enemy origin): In English for India: 17.30 7 June 1944, Digest, I, 8 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

When items were reported on, and did not provide the details of what had actually been broadcast, the entire report was sometimes included in brackets in the Digest.⁹⁴ This indicates that, by this stage, the Service was attempting to demarcate their employees' more subjective or contextual comments, from the documentary reporting of broadcast contents. There was, however, a fine line between producing a concise summary of a broadcast and a report on an item's assumed meaning and tone.

Another difficulty in the production of summaries, during this period, was the operation of a two-stage editorial process. As discussed in previous case studies, the production of a good summary was a complex enterprise. In order to properly summarise a broadcast, the monitor had to first fully understand and assess it. This involved a consideration of the subject under discussion, the commentator's view of the subject, any restrictions that prevented the commentator giving his view freely, the audience for which the broadcast was intended, and finally the desired response to the broadcast. Once a monitor had assessed the broadcast in this way, they then had to reconstruct the report for the intended consumer(s). This involved assessing the likely response and understanding of consumers to each passage of the report, so as to enable a monitor to convey to them, as much of their own understanding of the broadcast as possible. It was only by undertaking this complex assessment that summarisers were able to identify which details could be omitted from their reports.⁹⁵

This process of deconstruction and reconstruction left the editor at a natural disadvantage if they had to reduce the size of the monitor's summary further, not least because they were under even greater time pressure than the monitor to produce their report. In order to do justice to the original broadcast, and the monitor's summary, the editor had to perform, in this shorter time, the same assessment of the monitor's summary, as the monitor had performed on the original broadcast. Judging monitors' and editors' attempts at summarisation from a remove of sixty years, and without access to most of the original

⁹⁴ Croat Home Service: 22.15 5 June 1944, Digest, I, 6 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁹⁵ L. E. Furtmüller, 'Technology of Monitoring', Jan. 1947, BBC:WAC E8/209/3.

broadcasts would be very difficult. However, a comparison of monitors' and editors' transcripts from this period can illustrate some of the dangers of the two-stage editorial process, and of summarisation in general.

The first danger, when editors had to shorten reports of talks within a limited time frame, was that they would simply delete some sections of the report and transcribe others in full. One Digest report of a German talk, copied the monitor's transcript of the item verbatim, except for the final paragraph, which was entirely omitted. The paragraph in question related a story of how some 'Negro soldiers' had escorted a girl home to save her from American soldiers. The paragraph was probably omitted because it was regarded as merely further emphasising the primary message of the rest of the broadcast: the barbarity of American soldiers.⁹⁶ Within the context of the time, the omission of the passage may well have been justified. From an historic perspective, however, the paragraph has a degree of interest in revealing the Nazi party's media treatment of the issue of race. The fact that the Digest report of the item made no reference to the content of the missing paragraph meant that anyone interested in this aspect would be unable to request further details from BBC Monitoring.

Another danger of summarising under time pressure was that editors risked distorting the balance of a monitor's summary, by privileging certain aspects of the item over others. A monitor's two and a half page summary of a German talk, on the unnaturalness of the alliance between Britain and the United States, was summarised further, to only half a page, in the Digest. Both summaries were written in a direct style, except for one indication in brackets, 'extracts read', as to some content that had been omitted. The Digest report of the item, however, only relayed the complaints mentioned from the American side, and not the British, whereas the monitor's report had mentioned both. An anti-Semitic aspect to the talk, as included in the monitor's report, was also omitted from the Digest.⁹⁷ These omissions may again have been regarded as justifiable at the time, as the missing material was already well known, but it does reveal that monitors and editors frequently had different perspectives as to what information

⁹⁶ GES: 19.30 7 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST A137.

⁹⁷ GOS: In English for Africa: 20.30 8 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST A137.

was important. It also reveals some of the potential dangers of summarisation on a cumulative basis for the overall picture of broadcasting, against which consumers could assess new items.

Notes

Monitors' and editors' notes were included less frequently in the Digest than in June 1940. Notes were frequently included in brackets during this period, and were thus sometimes difficult to distinguish from summary reports of bulletin content. The Digest version of a war report, from a German Naval Base on the Atlantic coast, first stated that the commander had addressed the crew, before including a note in brackets, that the commentator had translated his speech. An account of what the commander had said was then provided in English in an indirect style.⁹⁸ Notes on the tone and style in which items had been delivered were also included in the Digest. The report of a commentary by William Joyce, in which he had read an imagined quote by Churchill, included the monitor's note that: 'The passage in quotes was spoken in imitation of Mr Churchill's delivery.'⁹⁹ A report of an item on the German home service also included the note that: 'The reporter appeared to speak without notes'.¹⁰⁰

Notes were furthermore used, as previously, to alert readers to any sounds or contextual factors that could be heard in a broadcast. The Digest report of a broadcast on 1 June, on the preparations of the German Navy, included a note that the shouting of orders had been heard at intervals throughout the broadcast.¹⁰¹ Monitors also occasionally noted the fact that music, or other items, had been included within a bulletin, such as, 'Talk preceded and followed by martial music' or 'Music: Onward Christian Soldiers'.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ GOS: In English for the Americas: 16.13 3 June 1944, Digest, I, 4 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

⁹⁹ GES: In English: 22.30 1 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST A137.

¹⁰⁰ GHS: 00.14 9 June 1944, Digest, I, 10 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

¹⁰¹ GES: 17.30 1 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST A137.

¹⁰² Rumanian Home Service: In German & Rumanian: 13.00 2 June 1944, Digest, I, 3 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179; Radio National (Enemy Origin): In English: 20.50 6 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

The news that certain items had been broadcast before, repeated or withdrawn was further conveyed to editorial, and sometimes consumers, by means of monitors' notes. One monitor included, alongside their report, that this cancelled a shorter version previously handed in, and the report of another broadcast included the note that it was a repeat of the previous night's broadcast, when reception had been worthless.¹⁰³ A German press transmission report (teleprinted at 07.56) was accompanied in the Digest by a monitor's note that the item had been subsequently withdrawn at 08.22. The item in question had stated that Roosevelt had warned journalists 'not to be "over-optimistic" about the Anglo-U.S. invasion of Western Europe'.¹⁰⁴ Finally, notes were still used by the Service to convey details about new transmissions or changes to the schedule to existing transmissions. A note in the 7 June Digest announced that between 06.00 and 13.30, items on the landings in France had been given as 'Invasion Flashes'.¹⁰⁵ The report of a Danish broadcast further included a note that the station had gone off air at 08.20.¹⁰⁶

Conclusion

As in June 1940, items selected for Flash transmission were those regarded as having immediate military, news or propaganda value, and Monitoring Report writers still sought to identify broadcast trends and items that related to key strategic concerns. The Digest had similarly maintained its character as a documentary source book, containing information of relevance to a large number of Monitoring consumers. As previously, however, a conflation of the political, military and information war, which resulted in a complex flow of information around the Government and BBC, frequently led to monitored items having more than one use. Identifying the primary reason for the selection of an item has occasionally therefore been problematic. Monitored reports of Allied bombing in Italy and northern France, for instance, had both potential military and propaganda value.

¹⁰³ GES: In English: 19.15 7 June 1944, IWM: BBC MST A137; GES: In English: 13.30 6 June 1944, Digest, I, 7 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

¹⁰⁴ German Telegraph Service (DNB): 7 June 1944, Digest, I, 8 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

¹⁰⁵ GES: In English, 6 June 1944, Digest, I, 7 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

¹⁰⁶ Danish Home Service: 8.15 2 June 1944, Digest, I, 3 June 1944, IWM: BBC MSD 179.

Further difficulties in identifying the value of monitored items were caused by the particular strategic circumstances of early June 1944, when Allied military offensives were expected in both east and west. These circumstances resulted in a narrowing of the gap between strategic and tactical military data. This explains why the Flash service, which previously supplied only tactical data, also included items indicative of German beliefs regarding Allied strategy during this period. German beliefs as to Allied strategy affected how they chose to deploy their forces and position their defences, which could have had an immediate tactical military impact on the progress of the imminent Allied offensive. The Flash service, during this period, as in 1940, still conveyed broadcast military updates on the location of Allied and German forces, as well as reports on casualties inflicted, prisoners taken and reports on shipping movements. It is also notable that the Service's expanded coverage of news agency transmissions continued to provide a frequent source of Flash items. The narrowing of the tactical and strategic divide, similarly explains why items on the positioning of German defences were included in Monitoring Reports during this period, when these documents had previously been devoted to a strategic overview of military developments, political alignments and broadcasting trends.

The progress of the war since 1940 had further resulted in a slight shift in the perspective from which broadcasting was monitored. Firstly, it was the Allies, and no longer Germany, who held the strategic initiative in June 1944. Therefore, whereas in the past monitored broadcasts were used to provide indications as to German strategic intentions, during this period they were used instead to provide indications of German beliefs as to Allied military strategy. Secondly, the stronger strategic positioning of the Allies had shifted the focus of the Service's collection priorities. In 1939 and 1940, the focus of BBC Monitoring had been in recording items that indicated, or sought to change, the attitude of neutral nations, including the United States, Spain and Balkan nations. During this period, however, the focus of the Service was firmly on items that indicated, or sought to alter, the attitude of German-occupied European nations who would be most immediately affected by the Allied offensive. This was because the reception of Allied forces by the populations of these countries could

hinder or help Allied military progress. This shift was illustrated by the amount of monitored broadcasting that indicated the attitude of the French population, and also explains the widespread inclusion in the Digest, for the first time, of items of local news from occupied-European countries.

The two major alterations to monitoring procedure that had been implemented since June 1940, had consequences for both the internal operation of BBC Monitoring and for the usefulness of BBCM material to external consumers.

Firstly, the introduction of headline sheets and the development of a main index, had improved the efficiency of the Service, by allowing monitors to easily identify repeated items prior to transcribing them. The development of the main indexes and the production of a daily index to the Digest also directly improved the usability of BBC monitored material for consumers. The central index enabled the Service to deal with large volumes of consumer enquiries and reduced the dependence of such enquiry work on the knowledge and memory of individual employees. The daily production of an index to the Digest also allowed consumers who were interested in particular subjects or news stories to easily locate them within the Digest, addressing the previous limitations of the document.

Secondly, the implementation of ‘confessional’ monitoring, on the one hand, helped to standardise the operation of BBCM, by enabling the selection of material by monitors to be limited. This was particularly valuable when dealing with new monitors, or those who were considered to have poor knowledge or judgement. On the other hand, the ‘confessional’ system theoretically integrated knowledge as to known consumer requirements more closely into the monitoring process, and at an earlier stage. This should have allowed a higher proportion of targeted reports to reach consumers faster. During this period, however, it is apparent that supervisors from the Information Bureau would not have been better informed about the major strategic moves of the moment than monitors, such was the secrecy of plans for D-Day.

An examination of the items selected for Flash transmission and chosen, from all monitors' transcripts, for inclusion in the Monitoring Report, has found contradictory indications as to whether or not this limited knowledge of government plans was a problem. The Service identified and relayed contradictory reports from German radio, regarding their beliefs as to the location and nature of the Allied landings in France. If Monitoring had been aware of the details of Allied invasion plans, or their plans for deliberate deception, it may have focused their attention on assessing the success of these plans more directly. It could equally, however, have led them to draw early conclusions about the material, and thus ignore the confusion and contradictory reports that evidently marked German broadcasting during this time. The Government's access to Ultra decrypts, and the Service's ignorance of this, also presented a challenge to the efficiency of BBC Monitoring during this period, for time was spent relaying reports that indicated German strategic beliefs, when the Government already had direct access to information on this subject. Monitoring may, however, have been used to help interpret Ultra material. This is in line with findings of recent studies that have considered the role of OSINT. The 2005 US Commission on the intelligence capabilities of the United States, for instance, concluded that 'open source provides a base for understanding classified materials'.¹⁰⁷

As well as providing translations of broadcasts, the Monitoring Service had an important function to fulfil in reducing the size of the material broadcast by all monitored stations, so as to make it more manageable for consumers. The Service achieved this reduction in three ways: by omitting repetitive items, omitting material considered to hold little interest to consumers, and by summarising items. Monitoring employees, even report writers, rarely made explicit subjective comments or judgements as to the material they selected to report. In reducing the material that reached consumers in these ways, however, employees had to make analytical judgements, not only of the significance of the

¹⁰⁷ 'The Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction': Report to the President of the United States', 31 Mar. 2005, p.378: <http://www.wmd.gov/report/index.html>, 1 Nov. 2008.

material itself, but also as to whether it contained information, either explicitly or by implication, that would interest any of their varied consumers.

The ‘confessional’ system theoretically aimed to prevent monitors themselves from exercising their judgement, as to what purpose the material they were recording would fulfil. Monitors, however, were allowed discretion as to how fully to report any item they heard, and were responsible for summarising material. This chapter has shown that more effort was made during this period, than in 1940, to reduce the number of direct judgements as to the overall significance and tone of a broadcast, and fewer separate monitors’ notes about tone were included. This gave the appearance of more objective reports, which allowed consumers to draw their own conclusion from the material. This chapter, however, has also shown that the construction of a good summary still depended on monitors’ and editors’ understanding of the meaning of the broadcast, even if they had become more skilled at concealing their judgement. The ‘confessional’ system thus did not prevent monitors from exercising their judgement, as to what consumers would be interested in.

Finally, these case study chapters have demonstrated the dangers of over-summarisation and overly selective reporting, for as former monitor Lux Furtmüller observed in 1947: ‘The process of condensation carried relentlessly to the end does not yield a magic essence, but a stale truism, an old repeat.’¹⁰⁸ Misjudgement in the handling of one broadcast item was unlikely to have any discernable effect. If standards were allowed to slip on a regular basis, however, if too much material was dismissed as repetitive, or summarisation was conducted to too great an extreme, then the result would have been a gradual diminution in consumers’ understanding of any transmissions, or their likely reception. Returning to the dynamic between media and intelligence set out in the introduction to this chapter, a diminished understanding by consumers, as to the content and impact of broadcast transmissions, would also have resulted in a diminished ability to anticipate and predict when media would result in changes in the physical world: to attitudes, behaviour and events. Thus Furtmüller’s

¹⁰⁸ L. E. Furtmüller, ‘Technology of Monitoring’, Jan. 1947, BBC:WAC E8/209/3.

observation that summarisation, conducted to its extreme, resulted in a lessening, rather than in an increase in meaning, also applied to the Monitoring Service operation as a whole.

Conclusion

This thesis has demonstrated the historic role played by BBC Monitoring in drawing broadcast knowledge of events, developments, and their international presentation and interpretation, into official flows of information. This information was used to wage Britain's information, political and military war.

During the Second World War, the British Government drew on the services and expertise of a number of non-governmental organisations, including FRPS and Mass Observation, which conducted public opinion analysis for the MoI during the first years of the war. Whereas their positioning outside the Government caused major difficulties for these organisations, the BBC Monitoring Service consistently expanded and secured regular funding for its operations throughout the war.¹ Monitoring moreover succeeded in establishing its value to consumers to a sufficient extent to ensure its continuance into the post-war and then Cold War period.

The relative historic success of BBC Monitoring during the Second World War rested on three key qualities: trust, breadth, and adaptability.

BBC Monitoring established the long-term trust of its consumers by providing them with consistent, quality translation, and regular selection of relevant broadcast data. The ability of Monitoring to produce quality and appropriate broadcast reporting depended in turn on the expertise of its employees, and on the practical working operations developed by the organisation to support and fully exploit their knowledge. Although the 'confessional' system theoretically tried to limit the extent to which monitors exercised their personal judgement, in practice it was recognised that monitors' expertise of language, broadcasting patterns, international affairs, cultural factors and specialist subject knowledge all added significant value and quality to their reporting. Monitors were thus permitted discretion as to how fully to report items, and were further encouraged

¹ Nick Hubble, *Mass Observation and Everyday Life: Culture, History Theory* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), chapters six and seven.

to both suggest items for Flash and to compose specialist reports on their areas of expertise. At the same time, standards were introduced to formalise translation technique, reporting style and regular broadcast coverage.

Secondly, the wartime success of the Monitoring Service depended on its breadth of broadcast coverage. The initial expansion of Monitoring was driven by consumer demand for global coverage. The Service itself, however, played a crucial role in maintaining a monitoring capability that could be refocused to changing strategic priorities as the war progressed. BBCM negotiated down, for instance, consumer demands for increased Balkans monitoring, and decided against both wholesale verbatim monitoring, and extensive coverage of US and Soviet broadcasting. Such long-term strategic planning not only prevented the Service from becoming unsustainably large, which would have attracted criticism, but also allowed it to maintain a basic universal coverage that could be adapted to short-term fluctuations in interest. This adaptive capacity was also undoubtedly assisted by the fact that many monitors employed at BBCM were fluent in several languages. This was the only reason the Service had an initial Russian monitoring capability, because no Russian-speaking monitors were specifically recruited before the war. BBC Monitoring's relationship with FBIS also provided them with reporting of Chinese and Japanese broadcast transmissions, which were largely un-receivable in Britain.

Thirdly, a large portion of the Monitoring Service's wartime success was based on its adaptability. From the very beginning of its operation, the Service consistently sought new uses for monitored material. It actively sought requirements from consumers, and developed its regular operation, output documents and services to meet differing consumer needs. During the first half of the war, BBCM even undertook a number of confidential, off-remit duties, such as taking down four-letter coded signals for the Service departments. It also accepted administrative responsibility for the Y Unit. The wartime Monitoring Service was also adaptable regarding its relationship to government. At the beginning of the war, BBCM produced both weekly analyses of monitored reports and later took an active role in selecting material for BBC broadcasting. It was thus prepared to take an active role in both intelligence analysis and in

conducting Britain's information war. The adaptability of BBC Monitoring further meant that once its analytic work was curtailed, due to its lack of access to confidential data and also, to an extent, due to departmental competition from Department EH, it still had other regular duties to fall back on.

The regular operation of Monitoring also survived because the organisation had been responsive to consumer needs during its initial establishment. At the beginning of the war it had frequently produced explicitly analytical style reports of individual transmissions. When advised to make its comment implied, rather than explicit, the Monitoring Service made efforts to adopt a more neutral reporting style, which allowed consumers to make their own judgement of the material. This affected the basic operation and function of BBC Monitoring, because allowing consumers to make their own judgements about broadcast material meant that they had to be provided with the ongoing evidence on which to base these judgements. In other words, monitors became responsible for developing consumer expertise in broadcasting, rather than just for providing their own expert judgements. This required much fuller, detailed reporting of individual broadcasts than would have been the case if monitors were allowed to explicitly assess broadcasts' significance. During the early stages of the war, the Monitoring Service thus developed the basic principle of 'documentary' monitoring, which has lasted in principle to this day. As the analytic work of the BBC Monitoring Research Section did not last the duration of the war, it is likely that the Monitoring Service itself would also not have lasted if it had chosen to adopt an overly selective or analytic style for reporting individual transmissions.

Priorities, Scope and Use

The case study chapters demonstrated that BBC Monitoring occasionally recorded points made by Axis broadcasting so these could be directly refuted or countered by Britain. This was the reason for which MoI planners initially requested the BBC to establish a wartime Monitoring Service. During the war, this priority was particularly reflected in the recording of reported Allied and Axis plane losses, and the claimed damage caused by bombing. This thesis, however, has also illustrated that Monitoring played a more complex role in the

conduct of Britain's information war. BBC Monitoring took a lead role, during the early years of the war, in assessing the organisation and guiding principles on which foreign broadcasting was based, especially within Germany. These assessments, alongside analyses conducted on BBC monitored material by government departments and agencies, were used to formulate the guiding strategic principles on which Britain's information policy was based. These strategic principles were in turn used to select monitored material, which provided a large proportion of the informational data used in Britain's information war, especially BBC broadcasting. This material was selected for inclusion in dedicated edited documents, such as those produced by the BBC Research Unit. It was also sent directly by the Monitoring Service to the BBC news and programme sections by means of Flash transmission or inclusion in the Digest. The relationship between the Monitoring Service and Britain's media output was therefore both circular and direct. Even the Monitoring Service's task of recording German transmissions of British POW names had a direct role in Britain's information war against the Axis.

The focus of this study on the role of BBC Monitoring during the war has further presented a more collaborative and harmonious overall picture of the conduct of Britain's propaganda campaign than the existing body of literature suggests. There was undoubtedly a degree of high-level tension between the organisations charged with waging Britain's information war, regarding authority, strategy and security. The eagerness of previous scholars to explain the eventual establishment of the Political Warfare Executive, and to present a picture of a gradually maturing BBC strategy, has however led them to ignore or sideline the level of collaboration and common purpose that underlay much of the day-to-day conduct of these organisations.² Even during the very early days of the war, the minutes of the meetings of the Joint Planning and Broadcasting committee presented a picture of close and fairly harmonious cooperation between the BBC,

² David Garnett, *The Secret History of PWE: The Political Warfare Executive 1939-1945* (London: St Ermin's Press, 2002); Siân Nicholas, *The echo of war: Home Front propaganda and the wartime BBC, 1939-45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp.46-47; 54; 65; Robert Cole, 'The Other 'Phoney War': British Propaganda in Neutral Europe, September-December 1939', *Journal of Contemporary History* 22:3 (1987), pp.475; Phillip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the present Day* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p.222.

the Ministry of Information and the Foreign Office. It is not that previous scholars have failed to recognise the existence of a common purpose between the BBC and the Government, nor the fact that the maintenance of an illusion of BBC independence and tolerance was primarily an issue of strategy rather than principle. Indeed, it has even been acknowledged that the press furore over MoI control of the BBC, such as that created over the resignation of BBC Director-General Frederick Ogilvie, was largely a part of this strategy, and did not reflect the reality of relations between the two.³ The focus on conflict over strategy, however, has overshadowed the amount of common purpose that drove their work on a daily basis. The BBC Monitoring Service acted as an important bridge between the BBC and the Government from the very beginning of the war, freely contributing to policy formulation and selecting material for BBC programming, often in the absence of any alternative source of information.

Aside from its role in the information war, the Monitoring Service also provided indications of political and military strategic value. Government departments conducted analyses that used BBC monitored material, amongst other sources, to discern the strategic intentions of Axis nations. The developments considered were both of a military nature, for instance that German may launch an invasion of Britain through Eire, or political, that a neutral nation, such as Spain, might join the Axis. The case study chapters also identified that BBC Monitoring directly reported items of potential strategic value to its consumers. The Monitoring Service further provided a daily survey of broadcasting directly to the War Cabinet, the body in charge of overall strategy. Like the longer Monitoring Report, this document was largely strategic in nature, as it surveyed broadcast items and trends indicative of new developments. The inclusion in the Digest of reports of economic and agricultural broadcasts from occupied Europe had a clear strategic value in assessing long-term Axis capability to wage war, and it is known that such data was specifically requested and sent to the MEW. Also, the very arrangement of monitored items in the Digest indicated the

³ Nicholas, *The echo of war*, p.5; M.R. Doherty, *Nazi Wireless Propaganda: Lord Haw-Haw and British Public Opinion in the Second World War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp.101; 186; Susan L. Carruthers, *The Media at War* 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp.73; 77-78; 92-93; Garth Jowett & Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 4th ed. (London: Sage, 2006), p.243.

Service's strategic priorities. German and German-occupied broadcasting remained the major monitoring priority throughout the war, after an initial focus on American broadcasting for the first few days of the organisation's history. The categorisation of broadcasts from different nations and the volume of monitored material contained within these categories, also illustrated shorter-term shifts in strategic focus throughout the war.

Thirdly, the Monitoring Service reported, and especially selected for Flash transmission, broadcast items that had immediate military or tactical value. Items regarding shipping, the location of mines and reported bomb damage were all sent by Flash to the Service departments. Broadcast updates as to the location of the military front line in Poland, France and Italy were all flashed at different points in the war. Such military information was sometimes tied to technical data regarding the transmissions, also supplied by BBC Monitoring. This included information as to whose forces controlled particular radio transmitters near to the front line.

The informational priorities of the Monitoring Service altered throughout the war according to changed military and political circumstances. During the periods covered by the first two case studies the recording of items that indicated the attitudes and intentions of neutral countries were a major strategic priority for the Service. In the changed circumstances of early June 1944, with the impending Allied landings, the Monitoring Service paid much more attention to items of local news from occupied Europe. Furthermore, monitored items that would have previously been regarded as providing strategic data, such as indications of German beliefs, became of increasing tactical military value.

The provision of news bulletins, by means of voice monitoring, was not a priority for BBC Monitoring. At the beginning of the war, this was because the BBC and Government already had access to intercepted telegraphic news agency transmissions, which provided news bulletins in a simpler format. Once the Monitoring Service took over responsibility for the majority of news agency coverage in 1943, it was then this source, rather than voice monitoring, that was used to convey new items of news to consumers. It has been found in this study,

that news agency transmissions, such as DNB, provided an important source of Flash news and military information, but that these items were not always included in the Digest. This was because they did not always have value to consumers by the time the Digest was compiled. Such items were, however, sometimes included in reports of later spoken broadcast transmissions, where the arrangement of news items or any 'propaganda twist in the presentation of news' could be conveyed to consumers, particularly those involved in the prosecution of Britain's information war.⁴ The Monitoring Service transcript collection is the only source from which it is possible to identify those items selected for Flash transmission during the war.

Finally, although this study has only traced the use of BBC monitored material within Britain's war effort, it has demonstrated that the reach and impact of BBCM reporting was far larger. The Monitoring Reports and Digests were distributed to international press organisations, to the exiled European Governments stationed in Britain, and also to the Governments of other nations including America and Australia. Most importantly, both FBIS and OWI selected material directly from BBC monitors' transcripts for transmission to the United States. BBC monitoring was thus used, not only throughout the US administration, but also found its way, via FBIS products, to other nations, including Canada.

The Monitoring Process

This thesis has also problematised monitoring. It demonstrated that monitoring was an intellectual task and never a mechanical or automatic one. Each stage of the monitoring process - listening, translating, and selecting broadcast transmissions - has been shown to be dependent on the knowledge, assessment, and skill of individual employees.

Tracing the organisational development and procedural operation of BBC Monitoring as it developed throughout the war, has demonstrated that the Service

⁴ Memo Rush to DMS, 15 June 1943, BBC:WAC E8/209/2.

succeeded in developing an increasingly regular output of coverage, and an increasingly standardised reporting style. This was achieved, as the Service expanded, by developing rules and guidelines for Monitoring employees. Monitors, monitoring supervisors and editors were given differing degrees of leeway as to how fully they were required to account for the content of each transmission. The development of a system for listing repeats, assisted by the establishment of a headline and index section, further helped to standardise coverage and save monitors' time. The wartime Monitoring Service was thus one of the first organisations to develop systematic methods to overcome information overload; one of the problems at the centre of current debates regarding OSINT. There was an additional attempt to provide guidelines as to the style in which different types of broadcast items should be reported. The more fully an item was reported, the more likely this was done in a direct tone, regardless of its length. Unless specifically stated on the transcript, however, it was not possible to identify whether an item was reported in verbatim or summary. When items were reported in a direct tone, which was frequently the case for news items, an impression of objectivity was given to monitored reports.

The application of these rules, however, remained dependent on the assessment of BBC Monitoring employees. Monitors, as well as translating items, were given discretion as to how fully to report each item, and in transmissions monitored for important items only, were also given discretion as to which items to report. Editors were given similar discretion as to how fully to report individual items, and were also allowed more discretion in choosing which items to report from non-German-controlled broadcasting.

Summarisation, like any form of selection, has been demonstrated to be an analytic task. This was because in omitting material summarisation reduced the full content and potentialities of the original broadcast. Thus former monitor Karl Lehmann's comment on the work of report writers applied to some degree to all monitoring employees:

By reducing the day's output to three pages you had to select, and by selecting, you selected upon the basis of your own unspoken analysis

of what was important, and therefore by doing that, in a way, you railroaded the analysis of the customer because you had given them not the whole material but a selection of material. So your selection influenced the analysis.⁵

Monitoring employees assessed and selected individual broadcast transmissions, based not only on their mastery of the language in which they were delivered, but also on a judgement of their significance within a wider media context, in which they, more than their consumers, were constantly immersed. Karl Lehmann may thus have been incorrect when he commented that, ‘the purpose of the Monitoring Service, certainly eventually, was not to analyse at all but to produce the raw material upon which an analysis could be based.’ In reality, the work of BBC Monitoring during the war would more accurately be summed up, in Ernst Gombrich’s phrase, as that of ‘a process of pre-digestion by experts for experts.’⁶

The operational procedures developed by the wartime BBC Monitoring Service represent an early historic attempt to systematically exploit and manage publicly available, open source information for intelligence purposes. This study of the Monitoring Service has illustrated that producing OSINT required considerable planning and management. In line with the findings of a number of modern commentators on the subject, OSINT may be preferable and more efficient to produce in many cases than the alternative of secret intelligence. In this historic instance, however, it was not unproblematic.⁷ Monitors with necessary linguistic skills had to be recruited in advance of their requirement, which was difficult in a rapidly changing strategic environment. This was necessary, however, because monitoring has been shown to be a skilled profession at which individuals improved over time, as they learned to hear and as their knowledge grew of both the content and tone of the media, and of customer requirements. The problems caused by tasking non-dedicated monitors to report broadcasting were illustrated

⁵ Interview with Karl Lehmann.

⁶ Interview with Karl Lehmann; Ernst Gombrich, “Swansongs” from 1945’, *Umění*, XLVI (1998), p.466.

⁷ Robert David Steele has long advocated the relative efficiency of OSINT, as opposed to secret intelligence, and has also recognised that exploiting the open source arena requires planning (See, for instance, Robert David Steele, *On Intelligence: Spies and Secrecy in an Open World* (Fairfax, VA: AFCEA International Press, 2000)). That OSINT is time-consuming to produce also acknowledged in: Wyn Q. Bowen, ‘Open Source Intelligence and Nuclear Safeguards’, in Robert Dover & Michael Goodman (eds.) *Spinning Intelligence: Why Intelligence Needs the Media, Why the Media Needs Intelligence* (London: Hurst, 2009), p.102.

during both the pre-war period, and in 1942, when the BBC received complaints regarding the quality of reports produced by BBC foreign language broadcast staff on temporary secondment to Monitoring.⁸

The task of translation has particularly been shown to be inseparable from that of selection. Monitors could only identify and communicate any significant developments or changes indicated by the media because they were constantly immersed in the language, tone and content of the transmissions of particular regions, countries and stations. Producing OSINT should thus be considered a profession and not a task that can be replaced, without any consequence in terms of quality and effectiveness, by translators employed on temporary contracts.

Wartime security concerns led to the assignation of official responsibility for editing and selecting material to frequently monolingual individuals, divorced from the listening process. Justifiable or not, this separation caused difficulties and conflict within the wartime Monitoring Service. On a practical level, information sharing, such as allowing monitors to read the Weekly Analyses, was considered worth the perceived risks involved. Security concerns thus played a disruptive, if necessary, role in BBCM's wartime production of OSINT, but where these could be overridden the monitoring process proceeded with greater harmony and the product provided to consumers was more targeted.

It was not only within the BBC Monitoring Service itself that a policy of openness and information sharing proved valuable. The decision to widen the distribution of BBCM reports as the war progressed, demonstrated the MoI's, trust in their consumers. In contrast to the experience in Germany, where the distribution of monitored foreign broadcast reports from Kurt Alex Mair's Sonderdienst Seehaus, were subject to severe restrictions, BBCM material was shared throughout the government, and even supplied to foreign governments and international press organisations.⁹ This was undoubtedly the result of

⁸ Letter from BW to DDG, 26 May 1938, BBC:WAC R34/476; Memo from DMS (Burns), 11 Feb. 1942, BBC:WAC R49/150.

⁹ Horst J.P. Bergmeier & Rainer E. Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves: The Inside Story of Nazi Radio Broadcasting and Propaganda Swing* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), pp.193-194; Doherty, *Nazi Wireless Propaganda*, p.9

differences in the institutional and political culture of the two countries. The decision to widely distribute reports of what was frequently enemy, anti-British propaganda did not only originate from cultural differences, however. It was also the result of a calculated decision that this was the most effective overall policy. When in July 1940, Department EH complained at BBCM's circulation of a defamatory NBBS report of one of their meetings, Tallents defended the BBC's action. He stated that broadcast reports had to be circulated widely and speedily in order to be useful and that it was impossible to consult everyone as to their possible reservations.¹⁰

This thesis has thus provided a body of historical evidence that suggests a subtle shift is required to the orthodox view that British intelligence during the Second World War owed its success to a strict policy of secrecy. From a methodological perspective, the experience of the wartime BBC Monitoring Service has further suggested that the very nature of OSINT production favours and profits from a policy of openness and information sharing. This is due both to the large volume of material frequently involved and also to the importance of language and cultural expertise within the intelligence process.

The Duxford Collection

This historic examination of the collection priorities, processes and operational procedures of the BBC Monitoring Service should make it easier for future researchers to use and assess the Monitoring archives held by IWM at Duxford.

This study has outlined the scope of the wartime Monitoring Service's collection priorities and station coverage. By describing the monitoring and editing procedures adopted during the wartime period, it has indicated the potential differences in content between the Monitoring Service Digest collection and the Monitoring Service transcript collection, which also includes teleprint slips of Flashed items. It has further alerted readers to the existence and arrangement of the Monitoring Service index collection, which is also held at Duxford.

¹⁰ Charles Cruickshank, *The Fourth Arm: Psychological Warfare, 1938-1945* (London: Davis-Poynter, 1977), p.106.

Although it is presently difficult to access and locate material contained in IWM's Monitoring Service collection of transcripts, this study has indicated that the index may be a valuable resource for researchers in locating relevant reports in the transcript collection for the later wartime period. Future digitisation of the index collection, or of portions of the transcript collection, would further increase the accessibility of this material.

This study has also made clear the nature and limitations of the Duxford collection for any future researcher. The Monitoring Service transcript archive, as extensive as it is, is not a complete record of all broadcast transmissions. This makes it particularly difficult to use the collection to make any quantitative assessment, or to make any definitive judgement as to what was not broadcast. For the wartime period, it would be possible to make approximate assessments and judgements of this type with regard to German broadcasting, especially German home transmissions and German transmissions in English, but it would definitely not be possible to make such assessments of non-German broadcasting. This study has further highlighted some generic issues concerning the monitoring of radio transmissions. The difficulties posed as regards to accurate hearing, the subjective nature of translation, and the potential for misrepresentation resulting from selection and summarisation, have all been illustrated. Any researcher seeking to make use of the BBC Monitoring Service archives must consider these factors when making assessments of the material contained within them. In other words, the BBC Monitoring Service archives are a selective record of broadcasting, they are not the media sources themselves.

The collection does, however, represent a unique record of international broadcasting composed in a large variety of languages, all located together and all translated into English. No other record of many of these transmissions exists elsewhere and trying to collate, from disparate archives, those original broadcasts that do exist would be a very time consuming task, even more so without the help of the BBC Monitoring collection to act as a guide to original programme scheduling. The IWM Monitoring archive thus allows for comparatively easy study of the international coverage of decisive events or conflicts. IWM's BBC Monitoring Service transcript collection furthermore contains a considerably

larger volume of material than the Digests, allowing researchers to gain a fuller picture of the content and scheduling of past broadcasting.¹¹

Suggestions for Further Study

This study has examined the operation of the BBC Monitoring Service during the Second World War, but it may be equally valuable to conduct similar investigations of the organisation during other time periods. A social science study of the present organisation, based on observation and oral interviews with employees, would have most value in exploring the current conditions and difficulties facing media monitoring operations, and could offer a significant contribution to informing the future orientation of BBCM.

Building on the work of Joseph Roop, Kalev Leetaru and Laura Calkins, an in-depth study of FBIS, based on assessment of FBIS archival records, would be valuable on a number of counts. It could uncover the similarities and differences in the operation of FBIS and BBCM, reveal how the collaborative arrangement between the two countries worked in detail, and indicate the content and potential value of pre-digital FBIS archives to other researchers. Similarly, a study tracing the use of BBC Monitoring Service reports by other non-British customers of BBC Monitoring, particularly the exiled European Governments stationed in Britain during the Second World War, would make an interesting study.

Thirdly, an historic account of broadcast monitoring in Nazi Germany during the Second World War would make a valuable contrast to Allied monitoring. The fact that Nazi Germany was a strongly authoritarian state, based on racist ideology, means that such a study offers to provide revelations about the conduct and culture of intelligence operations in authoritarian regimes.

¹¹ Estimates place the volume of material contained in the transcript collection as 10 to 20 times greater than the volume of material contained in the Digests. (Report BBC Monitoring Service, February 1940, BBC:WAC E8/209/1; A. White, 'BBC at War' n.d. (c.1943), p.27, IWM Duxford.)

Finally, this study has raised a number of potential fields of research, which may find valuable data in IWM's BBC Monitoring Service transcript and Digest collections. Most obviously there is wide scope for studies of the media coverage of specific events, and of the media output of particular nations and broadcast stations during specified time periods. The existence of the Monitoring Service index collection for the wartime period also makes identifying media coverage of particular military fronts, military services, events, places, and even key personalities easily identifiable. Monitored reports do not have to be used to study media either, for they are also a source of reported facts about political developments, social life and economic conditions. If BBCM material is used for the purpose of uncovering facts, however, it must be regarded with the same caution, as to its authorship and accuracy, as would be applied to media sources.

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Appendix 1: BBC Research Unit Long-term Campaigns

The eight long-term campaigns as set out by the Research Unit prospectus were:

1. The projection of the theme that victory in a world war is impossible without naval supremacy and that it is a fact that naval supremacy is at present Anglo-Saxon.
2. The Projection of the U.S.A. as an invincible ally.
3. The exploitation of history, particularly of the last war, as evidence that the Germans will lose this war and that we shall win it.
4. The projection of the New Order as an economic absurdity, a political tyranny, an, because of its fundamentally evil character, without possibility of survival.
5. The projection of British life and character.
6. The projection of the British Commonwealth as a vital and hopeful experiment in international relations.
7. The development of the idea that the political economic and cultural welfare of the world is bound up with the victory of Britain and the United States.
8. The continuous interpretation and vitiation of German propaganda as a machinery for delusion.

A new long-term campaign was added on 21 July 1941:

9. Britain's plans for post war reconstruction will give the world security and freedom.¹

Aim number two was also altered to make it a broader category:

2. The projection of the world powers as invincible allies
(a) U.S.A.; (b) U.S.S.R.; (c) China; (d) Britain.²

¹ Daily Synopsis, 21 Jul. 1941. IWM: BBC RU 263.

² The USSR and China sections were added to the aims on 29 July 1941 and Britain was first included in the category on 6 November 1941. IWM: BBC RU

Appendix 2: List of Supervisors and Monitors, August 1939

List of supervisors and monitors who were at Wood Norton in August 1939, prepared by Anatol Goldberg at the end of the war:

Mr Abdul Fattah, Mr Abensur, Mr Arnoldi, Mrs Barea, Miss Beerensson, Mr Belosselsky. Mr Bowman, Miss Brown, Miss Chaplin, Mr Cotton Smith, Mr Freeman, Mrs Futurian, Mr Gamel, Mrs Gillespie, Mr Ginn, Mr Goldberg, Mr Hallett, Mr Hawkins, Mr Jarvis, Miss Knott, Mr Marriott, Mr Nield, Miss Penny, Mr Renier, Miss Rink, Mr Silva, Mr Stucken, Mr Wardell, Mr Wasserberg, Mr Weidenfeld, Mr Wheatley, Mr Whitley, Miss Wilson, Miss Wright.¹

¹ 'Supervisors and Monitors at Wood Norton', by A Goldberg, 8 June 1945, BBC:WAC E8/209/3.

Appendix 3: Digest Contents, September 1939

List of Categories of Contents used in Digest of News Bulletins Broadcast from Foreign Stations, 13 September 1939 (08.00 – 16.00 BST)

Broadcasts from Germany

In English for European listeners

In English to Asia and Antipodes

In English to England

In German to Germany

In Afrikaans to South Africa

Broadcasts from France

In Arabic to Near East

In French to France

Broadcasts from Italy

In Arabic to Near East

In Italian to Italy

Broadcasts from Russia

In English to England

In Catalan to Spain

Broadcasts from Belgium

In French to France and Belgium

In English (short wave)

Broadcasts from Japan

In English

Summary of Transocean Copyright Bulletin Nos. 1528, 1529

List of Categories of Contents used in Digest of News Bulletins Broadcast from
Foreign Stations, 16/17 September (16.00 – 08.00 BST)

Broadcasts from Germany

In German to Germans overseas
In German to Germany
In German to the Far East
In German & English to Africa
In English to the Far East
In English to English listeners
In English to Africa
In Polish to Poland
In Spanish to Spain
In French to French listeners
In German & English to the Americas
In Spanish to Spanish America

Broadcasts from Italy

In Italian to Italian overseas
In French to French listeners
In English to English listeners
In Arabic to Arabic-speaking countries
In Italian to Italian East Africa
In Arabic to the Near East
In Spanish to Spain
In Portuguese to Brazil

Broadcasts from France

In Italian to Italy
In French to France
In German to Germany
In German to Austria

Broadcasts from Spain

In Spanish to Spaniards overseas

In German to German listeners

In French to French listeners

In English to English listeners

Broadcasts from Holland

In Dutch to Dutch listeners

Broadcasts from U.S.S.R.

In Russian to Russian listeners

Appendix 4: Digest Part I Contents, June 1940

List of Categories of Contents used in Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Part I, 5 June 1940

Stop Press

1A	German Home Transmissions
1B (Europe)	From Germany for Europe
1B (North America)	From Germany for North America
1B (South America)	From Germany for South America
1B (Africa)	From Germany for Africa
1B (Far East)	From Germany for Far East
1C	Slovakia
1D	Transocean and D.N.B. Press Station
1E (a)	Free German Station
1E (b)	German Revolution Station
1F	Denmark
1G	German-controlled Norway
1H	German-controlled Holland
1J	German-controlled Belgium

List of Categories of Contents used in Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Part I,
8 June 1940

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1A | German Home Transmissions
(including broadcasts for sailors) |
| 1B | Germany for Occupied Territory
(Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Norway,
Poland, Protectorate, Slovakia) |
| 1C | From Occupied Territory (as above) |
| 1D | Germany for England, France
(including “New British Broadcasting
Station”) |
| 1E | Germany for Italy |
| 1F | Germany for Neutrals in Europe
(Sweden, Spain, Hungary, Yugoslavia,
Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece) |
| 1G | Germany for Near and Middle East and India
(Turkish, Arabic, Hindustani) |
| 1H | Germany for Far East |
| 1J | Germany for Africa |
| 1K | Germany for North and South America |
| 1L | German News Agencies |
| 1M | German Free Stations |

List of Categories of Contents used in Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Part I,
9 June 1940

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1A | German Home Transmissions (including
broadcasts for sailors) |
| 1B | Germany for England (including “New British
Broadcasting Station”) |
| 1C | Germany for France (including Voix de la Paix
and Reveil de la France) |
| 1D | Germany for Occupied Territory
(Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Norway,
Poland, Protectorate, Slovakia) |
| 1E | Germany for Italy |
| 1F | Germany for Neutrals in Europe
(Sweden, Spain, Hungary, Yugoslavia,
Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece) |
| 1G | Germany for Near and Middle East and India
(Turkish, Arabic, Hindustani) |
| 1H | Germany for Far East |
| 1J | Germany for Africa |
| 1K | Germany for North and South America |
| 1L | German News Agencies |

1M From Occupied Territory
(Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Norway,
Poland, Protectorate, Slovakia)

1N German Free Stations

Appendix 5: Digest Part II Contents, June 1940

List of Categories used in Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Part II, 5 June 1940

2A	French Home Transmissions
2B	From France for England
2C	Reveil de la Paix
3A	Italian Home Transmissions
3B	From Italy for Abroad
3C	Vatican City
4A	U.S.S.R. Home Transmissions
4B	From U.S.S.R. for Abroad
5	U.S.A.
6	Estonia
7	Finland
8*	
9	Norway (Free)
10	Sweden
11	Bulgaria
12	Hungary

* Unclear why category 8 was left blank during this period.

13	Rumania
14	Yugoslavia
15	Turkey
16	Belgium (Lille)
17	Holland and Colonies
18	Switzerland
19	Spain
20	Portugal
21	South America
22	Australia
23	China
24	Japan
25	Eire
26	Iran
27	Egypt

List of Categories of Contents used in Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Part
II, 8 June 1940

2A	French Home Transmissions
2B	France for Abroad
3A	Italian Home Transmissions
3B	Italy for Abroad
3C	Vatican
4A	U.S.S.R. Home Transmissions
4B	U.S.S.R. for Abroad
5	Baltic (Sweden, Finland, Estonia) and Switzerland
6	Spain and Portugal
7	Balkans (Hungary, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece)
8	Near and Middle East and India (Turkey, Egypt, Iran, India)
9	Far East (Japan, China, Dutch East Indies)
10	Americas (U.S.A., South America)
11	Dominions and Eire (Australia, Eire)

Appendix 6: Digest Part I Contents, June 1944

Daily Digest of World Broadcasts, Part I, 2 June 1944 (00.01 1 June – 00.01 2 June)

- 1A (1) German Home Services
 (2) German Forces Service and broadcasts in German for Germans Abroad
- 1B (1) German European Services for United Kingdom
 (2) German European Service for Forces in U.K.
 (3) Stations claiming to be British: 1. New British Broadcasting Station; 2. Worker's Challenge; 3. Radio National
- 1C German European Overseas Service for France and French Colonies (for broadcasts from Vichy France and French Colonies see Pat II)
- 1D Broadcasts from Occupied Territories (excluding France) and German European Service for Occupied Territories: 1. Belgium; 2. Netherlands; 3. Norway; 4. Denmark; 5. Protectorate; 6. Slovakia; 7. Poland; 8. Hungary; 9. Romania; 10. Yugoslavia; 11. Bulgaria; 12. Greece; 13. Finland; 14. Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia
- 1E To Italy
- 1F German European Services for: 1. Eire; 2. Sweden; 3. Portugal; 4. Spain
- 1G German Overseas Services for Near and Middle East and India (Turkish, Arabic, Hindustani, Persian)
- 1H German Overseas Service for Far East (Asia and Australia)

- 1J German Overseas Services for Africa
- 1K German Overseas Service for U.S.A. and Canada (including
 broadcasts for U.S. troops abroad)
- 1L German Overseas Service for Central and South America
- 1M German European Service for U.S.S.R.
- 1N German Telegraph Services: 1. Transocean (Morse); 2. N.P.D.; 3.
 D.N.B.; 4. Transkontinent Press; 5. For Forces